2008 Annual School Report
Mount Hutton PS

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

Students
This year 168 students (90 boys and 78 girls) were enrolled at Mount Hutton Public School. Ours is an inclusive and welcoming community, and our students’ attitudes properly reflect those of the broader community. Students new to the school, including students from diverse backgrounds, quickly make new friends and settle in to their new environment. Like children from many suburbs in Lake Macquarie and Newcastle, Mount Hutton students are overwhelmingly Australian-born.

Ours is a school too, that maintains its links with the past. We still have a number of families here who, for generations, have sent their children to Mount Hutton Public School, going back to the 1950s when the Mullington family donated a block of land for its construction.

Staff
The staff at Mount Hutton have varied levels of experience but all work in a dedicated and professional manner to meet the learning and developmental needs of the students in their charge. It is a staff who are seen by the community as approachable and caring, and as having high expectations for their students’ success.

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

Significant programs and initiatives
Our participation in the Priority Schools Program (PSP) has come to an end after four years. The school’s clear focus on technology, literacy and numeracy during the four years of the program has ensured we are in a strong position to move forward in 2009.

In the second half of 2008 the school implemented a language development program with a visiting specialist, Mrs Nicole Dunn. Mrs Dunn’s work with teachers enhanced their skills in identifying and catering for students with receptive and expressive language issues. While it was not the focus of the program, Mrs Dunn also worked with some students to facilitate a detailed description of their needs.

Technology in teaching and learning is a priority at Mount Hutton. Every learning space, including the library, is equipped with an interactive whiteboard, and the school was one of the first to be part of the Connected Classrooms program.

The senior excursion program continued in 2008. Students in Year 5 and 6 ventured to the Aussie Bush Camp at Karuah for three days, exploring the local environment and taking part in a wide range of exciting activities. The senior classes will travel to the national capital in 2009 for a four-day excursion.

Student achievement in 2008

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3
Results in literacy for Year 3 students improved on the levels of 2007, up 55.9 points to 391.6 although still below the average of state (419.5) and the region (407). Two students achieved scores in the top band. The school’s best result was in Writing, at 405.8.
Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3
Results in numeracy for Year 3 students improved by 6.2 points on the previous year, but again, were below the average score for the region (397.2) and the state (409.6).

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5
Results in literacy for Year 5 students improved by some 10.8 points on the 2007 score. The result was above the region’s average (485.4) and just below the state average of 497.4. Our best result was in Writing, where our average of 504.6 was an improvement by some 27.1 on 2007 and was higher than both state and region.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5
The Year 5 numeracy result was also an improvement on 2007, up by 28.1, and 6.5 points above the region average.

Messages

Principal's message
Over time our school and community has built a partnership that has a clear focus on continued improvement, both inside the classroom and in the school’s physical environment.

This year has again seen significant improvement although some are not immediately obvious.

For the first time in many years the school staged a whole-school performance. "Mount Hutton Rocks" was an outstanding success. As a school we learned much about staging large events, and we hope to run a similar program in 2010.

The school has developed some outstanding technology resources. Our program to install interactive whiteboards in every learning space is now complete, thanks to funding from our hard-working parent body, from the Priority Schools Program and through the federal government program, Investing in our Schools. We are also now part of the Connected Classrooms program which provides further outstanding learning opportunities for staff and students. Our students are increasingly participating in interactive learning technologies, experiences that will stand them in good stead when they move to high school and beyond.

Our involvement in the Priority Schools Program (PSP) has ended after the school and community survey showed our needs had changed. Over the past four years the PSP has been an outstanding resource for the school and its students, and has assisted us to develop our resources in literacy and numeracy and to enhance our teachers' skills.

This year, too, has seen the school build closer links with its Indigenous families.

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, myself included. It has been a daunting role at times.

This year saw us hold a number of popular fundraisers such as the Easter Chocolate raffle, Mothers’ Day Stall, Cake Stall, Cookie Fundraiser, running the canteen at the School Athletics Carnival and Zone Athletics Carnival, Fathers’ Day Stall, Local Election and Family Portraits. The Cookie fundraiser proved to be unsuccessful due to the disorganised nature of the business that we were dealing with, but all other events were a huge success.

We have now begun a project with Hunter Workways, to which we have committed up to $3000. The project will see our grounds undergo general maintenance and improvement on which Hunter Workways will spend up to $5000.

Our other financial contribution for the year was $3000 for the additional security needed for classrooms which will enable us to now have security for all of our learning areas.

There has been an exciting conclusion to the year, with the Federal government foreshadowing both financial assistance for general maintenance and separate funding for the addition of structures that we do not currently have, such as a permanent library, a hall and possibly an upgraded or new administration and staff facility.

In addition to the above, we have established an Environment Committee and began the process of sourcing available grants. This committee, in which I am also involved, will see a number of long awaited projects begin to come to fruition, such as clearing and re-establishment of the creek, vegetable patch, water tanks, insulation of buildings, sustainable energy projects and many, many more.

This is truly an exciting time for our school, and it will need many minds and a great deal of commitment to make our money stretch as far and as sensibly as we can.

Mrs Shereen Kerr
**Student representatives’ message**

This year we have been rewarded with the great job of leading our school and its students. We have developed numerous leadership skills including public speaking, leading school assemblies and thanking visitors to our school. Throughout this year we have represented the school at Anzac Day, Student Leadership, Induction Days and have been called upon to thank the many visitors to our school.

Being a school captain can be really tough, as we’re expected to be reliable and consistently have excellent behaviour. We have had to set a high standard for the school and be good role models for the younger students and our fellow classmates.

Thank you to our families for their help with our farewell gift to the school. The four pencils represent the four important groups of people in schools – community, families, staff and students.

Thank you to everyone for an exhilarating year as the school captains and school vice-captains of 2008. We would like to thank Mr Findlay, Mrs Whalley and Mrs Visintin for a fantastic year in Year Six. We would also like to thank the student body who elected us as the school captains of 2008.

The experience of being a school captain is awesome and unbelievable. We, the current captains, wish the best of luck to the future school captains in their endeavours.

Paige Nicoll (Captain)
Joshua Rook (Captain)
Jessica Massingham (Vice-captain)
Luke Siponen (Vice-captain)

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**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**

Enrolments have fluctuated over the years, reflecting waves of development during Mount Hutton’s transition from a mix of rural and urban dwellings to what will be, in the Lake Macquarie Council plan, a suburb with a high degree of medium density housing. Children from families who built houses in the developments of the 1990s have now largely passed through the school and current enrolments are again at about the same level of the early 1990s.

Apart from 2007, the recent trend has been for boys to outnumber girls, and this is again the case in 2008 with boys making up 53.6% of the total. Some 7.8% of the school population have an Indigenous background, and 2.2% have a language background other than English.

![Enrolments Graph](image)

**Student attendance profile**

Student attendance improved slightly in 2008. The roll is called every day immediately children go into class, and attendance is formally monitored on a weekly basis. Regular messages about the importance of regular attendance are published in the school newsletter and in the half-yearly and yearly reports. Families whose children have high levels of absenteeism are offered support through the Home School Liaison Program.
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 information as possible.

The following table shows our class sizes as reported at the 2008 class size audit conducted on Tuesday 25 March 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total per Year</th>
<th>Total in Class</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>1/2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>1/2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>2/3</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structure of classes

This year the school again has seven classes, with five classes made up of students from a single grade and two classes being drawn from consecutive grades. As part of the school’s organisation to support students with learning difficulties, some students worked from time to time in settings other than their home classes, participating in programs provided by a language development specialist, an early school support teacher and a support teacher (learning).

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

Mount Hutton Public School has a full-time non-teaching principal, two assistant principals and five full-time teaching positions. One class is shared between two teachers (three days / two days). Part-time teachers include a teacher / librarian, an Early School Support Program (ESSP) teacher and a Support Teacher / Learning (STL). For most of the year the school has also had the services of an additional teacher who worked in all classes, teaching small groups of students with learning difficulties.

The school also had the services of a school counsellor for one and a half days every week.

Mount Hutton’s ancillary staff comprises a full-time School Administrative Manager and a part-time School Administrative Officer. Two part-time aides support the enrolment of students with disabilities.

This school’s staff members combine breadth and depth of experience with enthusiasm, commitment and care for students. Their average length of service is just under 21 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9.1</td>
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Staff retention

Our teacher/librarian, Mrs Sandra Burke, who has overseen the transition of the library into a high-technology, information-rich environment, has transferred to Garden Suburb Public School.

Mrs Jenny Barbour, well-known to students and families here, will take over the role at the beginning of 2009.

Our Assistant Principal, Miss Helen Fenwick, retired at the end of Term 4. Miss Fenwick’s
commitment to the school, its students and staff has brought about valuable innovation and improvement over the years, particularly in student leadership and in the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy.

There were no changes to permanent staff coming into the 2008 school year.

Staff attendance

Staff have access to leave entitlements such as sick leave. In 2008 the average daily attendance rate for staff, as determined by the Department, was 94.4%.

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>2008-11-30</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
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<td>Balance brought forward</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>80,472.26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>122,319.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
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<td>Interest</td>
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<td>Trust receipts</td>
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<td>Canteen</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>292,253.03</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
<td>17,421.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>18,140.06</td>
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<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>3,458.94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>98,536.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
<td>27,348.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>16,408.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>5,904.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>5,306.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td>237,226.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
<td>55,026.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A full copy of the school's 2008 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

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>

School performance 2008

We recognise that in addition to academic endeavours, student participation in creative arts is important for their overall growth and development, as are opportunities for participation in competitive sports, both as part of a team and as individuals. At Mount Hutton we remain committed to providing opportunities for each.

Achievements

Arts

The area of Creative and Performing Arts continues to be a priority for Mount Hutton with students participating in interest and extension groups in dance, choir and visual arts.

The school's dance group practises every week. Performances this year included the Hunter Dance Festival at the Griffith Duncan Theatre, the Eastlakes Cultural Festival, the school's Open Day for Education Week and the annual awards presentation ceremony at Hunter Sports High School.

This year saw the first of what is hoped to be many whole school performances, when children in all classes took part in the musical, “Mount Hutton Rocks”, written, produced and directed by Assistant Principal, Mrs Michelle Unterrheiner with the support and assistance of other staff and community members. Performed in the auditorium at Hunter Sports High School, the production was exceptionally well received by families and community members, and students enjoyed themselves thoroughly. We are aiming to produce a second whole-school performance in 2010.

Similarly, the choir had a strong year in 2008, performing at Eastlakes Cultural Festival and school and community functions.
Sport
This year students missed an opportunity to compete in athletics at the outstanding facilities at Glendale when the heavens opened and we were forced to postpone the event. The carnival was held a fortnight later at the Newcastle Athletic Field, with students in all years participating.

Students’ swimming skills were further developed in an intensive swimming program during November.

The school had a successful year in knockout competitions, with students participating in soccer, hockey, tennis and netball, and gala days in hockey, netball, basketball and soccer.

Three students received school blues for representing at Region or higher.

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)
Yr 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)
Yr 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

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

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3

In Reading, fewer Mount Hutton students are in the highest two bands than in the 2005 – 2007 average.

In Writing, Mount Hutton students are under-represented in Band 6 but this is offset to some degree by the number in Band 5. There are no students in Band 1.
Test results in spelling are disappointing, with the number of students in the lower three bands higher than both the state average and the local school group average.

Despite a better result in Band 6, school results in Grammar and Punctuation are over-represented in the lower three bands.

Results show that although improved from 2007, the achievements of Mount Hutton students are below the average performance of students across the state.

The number of students in Band 8 is markedly better than the 2005–2007 average but more than one quarter of students are in Bands 3 and 4.
In Writing, Mount Hutton performed at a similar level to students across the state in the top bands. No students are in the lowest band.

Fewer Mount Hutton students are in Bands 6, 7 and 8 than students from the local school group and students across the state. There is a high proportion of Mount Hutton students in Band 4.

One quarter of Mount Hutton’s students scored in the highest band, above the state level.

**Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5**

Year 5 numeracy results reflect an improvement in 2008, with a higher proportion of students in Bands 6, 7 and 8 than the school average for the past three years.
Progress in literacy

The progress of matched students from Year 3 to Year 5 (2006 – 2008) was slightly down on 2005 – 2007, and lower than state and local school group figures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>71.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSG</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>83.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>86.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Writing, however, the school’s 2006 – 2008 growth of 77.9 was 4.2 points better than the local school group and 6.7 points better than the state average.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSG</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>80.1</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Progress in numeracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSG</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>80.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>80.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The progress of matched students in numeracy is lower than both the progress of the local school group 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 5 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2008

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant programs and initiatives

Priority Schools Program

Mount Hutton Public School has been part of the Priority Schools Program (PSP) since 2005. The PSP provides additional funding and staffing to schools whose communities are identified as having significant social and economic needs. Schools are selected for the program through a process of surveying all families.

The PSP has been of enormous benefit to our school, supporting intensive training for teachers in literacy and numeracy, funding a bank of resources again in literacy and numeracy, enhancing the library’s collections and supporting the school’s work to devise a scope and sequence in literacy and numeracy, including assessment tasks.

One of the most significant improvements is that through funding provided by PSP, and with additional funds from our P&C Association and through a federal government grant, the Investing In Our Schools Program, the school purchased and installed interactive whiteboards in every classroom and in the library. All teachers have been trained in their use and a system of mentoring continues to support an expansion of their expertise. Our experience is that there are substantial benefits, particularly in ensuring that learning is a two-way process in which students play an active role, answering questions and contributing to discussions, and using the whiteboard themselves to demonstrate an example, or a particular point of view.

The 2008 PSP survey demonstrated the level of need in our community has changed and we no longer qualify for participation in the program.

Aboriginal education

Mount Hutton Public School is committed to lifting learning outcomes of Aboriginal students to parity with the achievements of all students.
Consultation with Aboriginal families was of paramount importance. Teachers in all classes worked with families to negotiate personalised learning plans (PLPs) for Aboriginal students, with a focus on improved literacy, numeracy and attendance.

At a consultative meeting with Aboriginal families, the school was described as the heart of the community. We discovered that our families were largely unaware of other families with an Aboriginal heritage, possibly because families had their origins in different regions. It was emphasised that the school—students and staff—are respectful of each other, and no family reported any instance of racism through the school. It was also noted that the school had high expectations of success for all students.

The meeting resolved that the school should:

- Seek to provide further individualised support for students;
- Investigate the possibility of a community room on the grounds. It would be a room for all families, not just for Aboriginal families;
- Source and display appropriate examples of Aboriginal art in the buildings and grounds; and
- Provide support for families to be better able to assist their children with homework.

Through a program planned through the Gateshead Local Management Group, the school engaged a tutor to work with Aboriginal students in literacy and numeracy during Term 2 and Term 3. All children made significant gains towards the learning goals set at the start of the program. We were pleased to see that, as a group, attendance improved measurably during the course of the program.

All students celebrated NAIDOC Week through participation in a whole-school program of cultural activities, including storytelling, art and dance.

Multicultural education

The school continues to promote community harmony through school policies and practices which address racism and intolerance and develop understanding of cultural, linguistic and religious differences, including specific teaching in the classroom and participation in activities inside and outside school, as part of the school’s policy, “Cultural Diversity and Community Relations”.

The school has a trained Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO). This year there was just one report of racist language reported to school staff. It occurred outside the school. The issue was addressed and resolved by the Mount Hutton ARCO.

Respect and responsibility

The Student Council is an important feature of school leadership at Mount Hutton. Students elect class representatives to the Council at the beginning of each semester and these student leaders are inducted at a whole school assembly. After being pinned with their badge of office by their parents, the new semester’s student leaders pledge to carry out their roles to the best of their ability. Council debates issues and ideas brought to it by class representatives and decisions of Council are then put to the Principal in the form of recommendations.

The school has a strong and successful anti-bullying program, formerly known as the Peer Relationships Program, now in its eighth year. Student surveys show a continuing trend towards a school where students feel safe.

Each class negotiates a set of rules, based on the Core Rules of the Department of Education and Training, which aim to promote personal responsibility and co-operative behaviour.

Progress on 2008 targets

Target 1

Improved student performance in literacy: fifty-five percent of students in Year 5 achieve Basic Skills Tests results in either Band 5 or Band 6.

The school implemented professional learning activities to further develop teachers’ abilities to engage students with special needs, including lower and higher achievers.

Teacher and parents included literacy as a priority when devising personalised learning plans (PLPs).

Teachers continued to develop rubrics and common assessment tasks in writing.

Our achievements include:

In the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results, 51% of students achieved results in the top three bands (the NAPLAN has a different scale to the Basic Skills Tests).

Mount Hutton students excelled in the Writing test, with 60% of students in the top three strands, and the progress of matched students from Year 3 to Year 5 (2006 – 2008) was higher than both state and region.

Teachers in all years devised assessment tasks for which the standards for different levels of achievement were clearly described.
Target 2

*Improved student performance in numeracy: fifty-five percent of students in Year 5 achieve Basic Skills Tests results in either Band 5 or Band 6.*

All teachers undertook further training to develop their skills in planning and implementing programs in mathematics which incorporate a working mathematically framework.

The school trialled a different organisational structure in Stage One classes to address the needs of all students, including students with special needs.

Where appropriate, teachers used the Learning Framework in Number (LFN) and the Schedule of Early Number Assessment (SENA) guides to assess and group students, and to record their progress.

The learning of students at risk was monitored, with support provided where possible (through the Learning Support Program, aides and the Parents as Partners tutor).

The school developed and implemented workshops to support parents in their understanding of how mathematics is taught.

Improved numeracy learning was included in all negotiated personalised learning plans.

Our achievements include:

Of our students, 52% achieved results in the top three bands (the National Assessment Program has a different scale to the Basic Skills Tests). While this year’s results reflect an improvement over 2007, the mean score was still 10.6 points below the state mean with the difference being much higher for girls (18.1 for girls compared to 7.7).

Whilst at first there appears to be little or no difference between the strands, further analysis reveals for the girls’, measurement, data, space and geometry are much lower than their number results, while for boys, number was lower.

Target 3

*Improved peer relationships: Ninety percent of students will report they “always” or “usually” feel safe at school.*

The Achieve program was trialled in four classrooms, and will be implemented fully in 2009.

Our achievements include:

The goal of 90% was not achieved but 74.7% of students responded that they “always” or “usually” felt safe at school. Only 2% responded that they “never felt safe”.

Data for the graph below is drawn from alternate surveys over the eight years the program has been in place. It collates students’ “Never” responses to questions about the number of times they have been bullied in different ways in the year of the survey (they are asked about how often they are teased in an unpleasant way, called hurtful names, left out of things on purpose, hit or kicked, or threatened with harm). These data provide firm evidence that students feel increasingly safe at our school.

![Graph showing safety levels over years](image)

**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 2008 our school carried out evaluations of Learning (educational and management practice), and Information Communication Technologies (ICT).

**Educational and management practice**

The educational and management practice selected for evaluation in 2008 is Learning.

**Background**

This is the first full year in which students have seen a significant amount of teaching conducted through the medium of interactive whiteboards. The school used three surveys in gathering data: two SchoolMap “Learning” surveys (for students and teachers) and the Mount Hutton school and community survey.

**Findings and conclusions**

Students and teachers agreed that learning opportunities are provided within a stimulating and secure environment. The high positive response suggests that these are classrooms where the learning environment is structured to support and
encourage students to take risks, and where students access technology as an integral component of their learning. Students, teachers and parents are very positive about the equipment they have at their disposal.

Communication between the home and the school is something that teachers see as happening “almost always”; students less often.

Families, teachers and students share the expectation that all students will progress in their learning, and that their success is recognised, shared, valued and built into further learning.

Similarly, students are aware that their teachers expect that they (the students) will take responsibility for their learning, and expect that students will achieve personal excellence and take pride in their achievements. There is expectation, too, by both students and teachers, that students will be able to work independently at appropriate times and work collaboratively on both negotiated and set learning tasks.

In the classes surveyed students largely agreed that they reflect on their learning and engage in self-assessment. This is particularly so in classrooms where teachers have developed rubrics to guide students towards success, supporting the student with strategies to measure their own learning.

As a group, teachers strongly supported the statement, “I continually upgrade my skills through professional training and development”, ensuring their practice is relevant to the needs of the student, and it is evident too that teachers collaborate to improve their teaching practice.

In the school and community survey, 97.7% of parents responded either “almost always” or “usually” to the statement, “What my child is asked to learn is important”. There was a similar level of response to the statements, “The school encourages students to do their best” (95.3%) and “The school encourages everyone to learn” (100%).

Future directions
The school will continue to explore the opportunities presented by the use of technology in teaching and learning.

Curriculum
The curriculum selected for evaluation in 2008 is Information Communication Technologies (ICT).

Background
In recent years Mount Hutton has vigorously pursued the path of improving its technology resources that can be utilised by teachers to enhance teaching and learning. As a school we are conscious that there are gaps in our work. The purpose of this evaluation is to identify the gaps and to plan our path for the next three years.

Findings and conclusions
The school has many advantages in its work in Information Communication Technologies.

Interactive whiteboards (IWBs) are installed in every classroom, in the library and in the staffroom. The Year 6 room is set up as a Connected Classroom, and the facility is used by other teachers and classes from time to time. Every classroom has a bank of up-to-date, functioning computers, as does the library. All rooms are now protected by an alarm system.

The school-wide network has a 1000Mb backbone and switches that provide 1000Mb connectivity to the servers and routers. While this capacity meets the current needs of the school, it is impossible to know what demands will be placed on the system by new and developing technology.

All teachers are increasingly confident users of IWBs, and work collegially to improve their skills. All teachers are confident users of technology at school and out of school. They use email for both school and private purposes, and have skills in Internet use. The school’s technology coordinator is in her third year in the role, and has developed skills and strategies that ensure the network is as trouble-free as possible.

Students have practical experience of IWBs in every class, and are also increasingly confident users of the facilities. Teachers report that students are significantly more engaged when the IWB is used in lessons. Some students have developed skills in IWB use that is greater than the skill of their teachers. Students also have regular access to workstations in their classrooms which they use for a range of purposes including Internet searches, emailing and word processing.

The school has identified some challenges. Damage and theft during unlawful entry is difficult to control (although less likely now that all
classrooms are alarmed). Of concern here re the periods in affected classrooms when teachers have not had been able to access ICT facilities and resources until repairs were completed (this has affected the Connected Classroom equipment and two other classrooms). Other issues include an urgent need to develop the school’s website, and an equally urgent need to review and revise the school’s ICT scope and sequence, first written in 1997 and later revised. Classroom practice is currently beyond the scope of the document. Finally, the school’s connection to the wider world continues to be subject to relatively frequent breakdown, whether through storms or some issue with the line.

A further threat is that only the current technology coordinator has the skills to maintain the system. In the review, a number of opportunities were identified. All stakeholders in the community—student, staff and parents—strongly support the use of ICT in teaching and learning. Teachers are keen to progress further—including looking into such initiative as wikis, podcasts and blogs—and have the resources to support their work. Next year the school will have a new teacher / librarian who is keen to develop the library as a centre for ICT. Importantly, the P&C continues to be prepared to fund key infrastructure.

Future directions
In 2010 the school will:

- Ensure existing technology is maintained at a high level across the school to provide continuity of access for students and teachers.
- Develop the library as a centre for innovation in learning and teaching practice through learning technologies.
- Extend the operation of the Connected Classrooms program to include all students and teachers.
- Continue to explore innovative technology-based strategies to enhance student learning.
- Review and update the school’s ICT scope and sequence.
- Develop and implement a system for monitoring and tracking students’ ICT skills.
- Continue to develop the school’s staff training / mentoring model (developing skills in the use of interactive whiteboards and other learning tools).

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction
In 2008 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below.

The percentage figure represents the proportion who responded “Almost always” or “Usually” on a four-point scale (Almost always, Usually, Sometimes, Never).

What my child is asked to learn is important (97.7%).

The school knows about the families and community in which it serves (92.7%).

School leaders have a positive influence on the school culture (90.5%).

The school often praises and rewards individuals who are successful (95.3%).

The students are the school’s main concern (97.4%).

Parents support what is happening at the school (86.4%).

I am proud of the school (93.2%).

The school encourages new students and their families to be involved in school activities (93.0%).

The school encourages students to achieve their best (95.3%).

The school encourages everyone to learn (100%).

The school caters for the learning needs of all students (90.1%).

The school is continually finding ways to improve what is does (95.3%).

Where necessary, the school makes important changes to what it does (95.2%).

Professional learning
Professional learning in 2008 emphasised further development in literacy, numeracy and student welfare.

We focused on developing rubrics and common assessment tasks in writing, ensuring all students know what needs to be done for them to aspire to
achieving the grades of outstanding or high. We furthered the implementation of quality teaching and learning with particular respect to the Quality Teaching Framework, and we undertook activities to further develop teachers’ abilities in adjusting the curriculum, enhancing their ability to engage students with special needs, including lower and higher achievers.

Teachers were trained in the Learning Framework in Number (LFN) and the Schedule for Early Number Assessment (SENA) to assess and group students. We reviewed strategies to monitor and analyse student learning in mathematics, and how to provide intervention when required. We developed skills in designing assessment tasks, and we worked towards consistent teacher judgement about student achievement.

In Student Welfare, we trained five staff members in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention strategies, and through staff meetings reviewed our behaviour management practices.

A mentoring model was adopted for further training in technology in teaching and learning, with teachers with advanced skills teaming with less skilled colleagues.

School development 2009 – 2011

Areas for development were agreed upon after analysis of school and community data. The areas to be a focus for the three-year period 2009 – 2011 are literacy, numeracy and information communication technologies (ICT).

Targets for 2009

This first year of the 2009 – 2011 plan lays the groundwork for future success, reviewing and refining the teaching and learning practices at Mount Hutton.

Target 1

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

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Reviewing school assessment and reporting processes, and revise where appropriate.
- Providing professional learning opportunities for teachers to broaden their understanding and application of the Quality Teaching Framework (QTF) and Consistency in Teacher Judgement (CTJ).
- Developing a database of students to facilitate monitoring of and planning for those students who are underperforming, who have higher support needs, or who require extension in any English strand.

Our success will be measured by:

- Assessment is the basis for learning in all classrooms.
- Analysis of classroom programs and teaching practices indicate the dimensions and elements of the quality teaching framework are in place in all learning settings.
- 60% of Year 3 students achieve Band 4 or higher in the National Assessment Program (53% in 2008).
- 55% of Year 5 students achieve Band 6 or higher in the NAPLAN (50% in 2008).
- Progress of students in target groups is trending towards being equivalent to the progress of the school’s wider population.

Target 2

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

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Monitoring student assessment, ensuring it is an integral part of the teaching process and students are building on what they know.
- Reviewing and revising where necessary how the school tracks student progress in mathematics.
- Planning joint assessment tasks with accompanying rubric to ensure consistency in teacher judgement with assessment (including consistent application of the A-E reporting scale in each class).

Our success will be measured by:

- Assessment is the basis for learning in all classrooms.
- Analysis of classroom programs and teaching practices indicate the dimensions and elements of the quality teaching framework are in place in all learning settings.
- 65% of Year 3 students achieve Band 4 or higher in the NAPLAN (59% in 2008).
- 58% of Year 5 students achieve Band 6 or higher in the NAPLAN (55% in 2008).
- Progress of students in target groups is trending towards being equivalent to the progress of the school’s wider population.
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.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Ensuring existing technology is maintained at a high level across the school to provide continuity of access for students and teachers.
- Developing the library as a centre for innovation in learning and teaching practice through learning technologies.
- Extending the operation of the Connected Classrooms program to include all students and teachers.
- Continuing to explore innovative technology-based strategies to enhance student learning.
- Reviewing and updating the school’s ICT scope and sequence.
- Developing and implementing a system for monitoring and tracking students’ ICT skills.
- Continuing to develop the school’s staff training / mentoring model (developing skills in the use of interactive whiteboards and other learning tools).

Our success will be measured by:

- The extent of technology integration in each classroom.
- Analysis of student’s achievement against the skills and understandings listed in the scope and sequence.

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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