Principal's message

I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2008 which highlights some of the achievements of our school during the past twelve months.

The small school environment has always been a special attribute of this school and this environment enables us to provide a wonderful array of opportunities for our students which are not always available at schools with larger student numbers.

To ensure our students also have access to a wider range of activities and a greater peer network we are also an integral part of the Southern Cross Community of Small Schools.

During 2008 our students participated in a number of initiatives through this group which were enjoyed by the students and were always highly anticipated.

Our staffing remained consistent throughout the year with minimal changes. The students have enjoyed a wonderful year of achievements and opportunities which would not have been possible without the commitment and dedication of our teachers. I would like to thank Mrs Annie Roberts, Mrs Meg Potter, Miss Karen Hinrichsen and Mr Spencer who joined our staff last year, for their support to the school and our students.

During the year the school has been improved with an upgrade to the playground area which was achieved through Federal Government funding and parents’ help.

The school community has again provided excellent support to the school and students in 2008 in all school activities. I would like to thank all the parents who assisted during the year with a wide variety of activities including the major Working Bee for the new playground sandpit and particularly the other P&C Association office bearers for their support during 2008.

Ms Bonita Avery

P&C message

2008 was another very successful year for the P&C Association. There was a very active fundraising program initiated with raffles, street stalls, BBQ’s and the sale of pavers. The money raised meant that new resources were able to be purchased for the students.

Parents also provided canteen facilities for students one day per week and support at small schools carnivals and other school activities.

I would like to thank all the parents who assisted during the year with a wide variety of activities including the major Working Bee for the new playground sandpit and particularly the other P&C Association office bearers for their support during 2008.

Mrs Leanne Pippo

Student representative's message

In order to promote and develop leadership skills, the school captaincy is rotated during the year to give as many students as possible the opportunity to be in a leadership role. In 2008 Year 6 students represented their peers and the school in a variety of areas. The students were also actively involved in a number of community events and fundraising activities. Some of these included:

- Casual for a Cause Days held each Term
- Jeans for Genes Day

The students also participated in their own fundraising initiatives to raise money for their excursion to Camp Goodenough.

The environment was another area our senior students were concerned with in 2008. Not only did they get actively involved in Clean up Australia Day but also National Schools Tree Day. They recognised the benefits of tree planting and participated in the day by planting nearly 30 native tree species along the back fence line of the school property. These trees were mulched and cared for by the senior students as they got established in their new home.

Ms Bonita Avery
School performance 2008

Students at Empire Vale School were again provided with a wide variety of opportunities in 2008. Outlined below are some of the activities and achievements across a range of program areas.

Science and Technology

Our science understanding was enhanced with hands-on workshops and demonstrations from Fizzics Education and CSIRO Education. Workshops included Living Things, Robotics, Magnetics, Renewable Energies, Liquids, Air Pressure and an amazing Liquid Nitrogen show.

Our Year 2 and 3 students participated in specialised science lessons, providing smaller class sized groups and maintaining group dynamics within the Year 2 group, which have had to be split within two classes, throughout 2008. The students responded positively to the smaller class sizes and enjoyed a great variety of learning experiences.

The whole school had the opportunity to visit the Life Education Mobile Classroom, exploring the science of the human body. The senior classes learnt about harmful chemicals and substances which can alter the health condition of a person.

Visual Arts

Our student’s artistic skills were celebrated when our school won first place in the Primary School Art Category and first place in the Primary School Photography at The North Coast National Show. The school was also awarded a wealth of encouragement prizes for our work at this exhibition.

Two students were awarded prizes for their relationship photography from the ‘Thanks Dad Photo Exhibition’.

To help celebrate the ‘Year of the Potato’ our students were asked to decorate a potato, which was judged by an active community member. A selection of potatoes was photographed and the Year 4 writing group created jokes to compliment the decorated potatoes. Our creative work was submitted into the McCains Year of the Potato website, where we won a $500 grant.

Dance

The whole school participated in dance workshops, facilitated by The Australian Academy of Dance. Each class learned a contemporary dance which they confidently performed within the ‘Alice in Wonderland’ performance. The students also learnt a variety of social dances in fitness sessions, which helped to make our school disco a great success.

Music

The school learnt a range of traditional, modern and Australian Christmas carols which they performed at our annual Carols Evening. This year the school was proud to perform a carol which was written by Kim Toft, a local community member.

The students from Years 2-6 experimented with Samba Carnival Rhythms, with a small group performing a simple percussion item at the annual concert. Funds have been provided by the P&C Committee for the purchase of new percussion instruments.

Drama

The school performed ‘Alice in Wonderland’ for the mid-year concert. The concert included performance skills such as acting, dance, comedy, lighting effects and audio visual presentations. The students were actively involved in prop making, stage design and the development of promotional materials, creating a wonderful, holistic drama experience.

The senior class explored artistic ways to express mathematical concepts through art, drama and DVD production, which they presented with great confidence at the regional Maths Olympiad Challenge.

Creative Writing

It has been a sensational year for our Senior Writing group. The students’ ability to express themselves through a variety of text types and think outside the square has helped our school to obtain some great resources. These resources include a 27,000 litre rain water tank in the Bluescope Tank a Day Challenge for poetry and short story writing and a $500 grant from McCains foods for writing jokes.

Their written contribution within The Northern Star’s Newspapers in Education program led to winning a prize within ‘The Advertising in Education’ category and helped Miss Hinrichsen be recognised for a ‘Terrific Teaching Award’

The senior class explored artistic ways to express mathematical concepts through art, drama and DVD production, which they presented with great confidence at the regional Maths Olympiad Challenge.
Chess and Draughts Competition

Students participated for the first time in the Chess and Draughts Competition. They competed against Newrybar, Rous, Wardell, Fernleigh, Broadwater and Tregeagle schools.

The ‘Chess’ team did very well and tied for 2nd. All students enjoyed the day and were excellent ambassadors for the school.

Sport

The 2008 school year again proved to be a busy time for students, in terms of sporting involvement. Some of the highlights for the year are outlined below.

- Students from K-6 participated in small schools swimming, cross country and athletics carnivals.
- One student was named Junior Boys Champion and one student was named 11 year old Girl Champion at the Small School Swimming Carnival.
- Six students competed in the Ballina District PSSA swimming trials.
- Our students performed very well in a number of events at the Athletics Carnival with ten students going on to represent the school at district level in Ballina. Further on from this, one student qualified to compete in the Zone Athletics Carnival.
- The Small Schools Cross Country was hosted by Teven Tintenbar and again our students from Kindergarten to Year 6 participated in a competitive, yet friendly manner.
- This year saw the second time the AFL Plateau Cup was run both in Terms 1 and 4. On both occasions the Year 3 and 4 children put in a great performance and were successful in making the finals.
- All classes participated in the Premiers Sporting Challenge, which was a record keeping activity to see how much exercise children did every day for a period of 18 weeks. Children received certificates and the school earned a small sporting grant.
- All children at the school had the chance to participate in a 3 week Rugby League Program based at the school.
- The whole school swimming program in Term 4 was again a huge success. Senior students were able to extend their skills to include basic rescue and survival.
- This year even the teachers took on the challenge and competed in a 12 week fitness program. The children also became involved with daily fitness sessions.
- Bike week was again a popular event at the school and included visits from the police and bike maintenance experts. Children had the opportunity to ride their bikes on the playground, which was transformed to a variety of roads, tracks and intersections.

Excursions

Camp Goodenough

As part of the Year 4, 5 & 6 work on Environmental Studies and working as a team, the school chose Camp Goodenough Recreation Camp for the senior major excursion this year.

Surrounded by rainforest, Camp Goodenough’s large property offered a range of adventure activities such as the Giants Playground, High Ropes, Flying Fox & much, much more! The program promoted self-esteem, teamwork, leadership skills, responsibility, comfort-zone work, the environment & wildlife.

An additional day was added to the excursion back at home where we joined with students from Red Range Public School in participating in a Surf School and Kayaking trip.

The senior class had a fabulous time. They made some new friends with the Red Range children and gained some new found confidence in completing such activities as the high ropes.
National Parks and Wildlife Excursion

The whole school attended an environmental science excursion to Patchs Beach to learn about fragile coastal habitats and how to protect an endangered species living within our local environment particularly the Pied Oystercatcher. The students’ science knowledge was supported by the educational support team from Parks and Wildlife and The Forestry Commission.

The students were treated to hands-on activities to help in their understanding and to build on their classroom research.

Northern Star Excursion

Our senior class enjoyed a visit to the Northern Star Media Centre and the ABC Radio Studios. The visit helped them to understand the science of modern communication systems. The students were delighted when asked to create an audio promotion for the ABC Regional Radio and took part in a recorded interview promoting our school.

Student Academic Achievement

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

Nine Year 3 students sat all components of the NAPLAN assessment tasks. Due to the small group size it is not possible to report on actual results without identifying individual students. However results have shown that:

- students performed better in reading and writing than in spelling and punctuation and grammar.
- the average reading result for students in Year 3 at Empire Vale was higher than the average state result.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3

Nine of our Year 3 students also sat the numeracy component of NAPLAN. Because of the small group size it is not possible to report actual results that identify individual students. It can be noted that:

- more than fifty per cent of students were in Band 4 or higher.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5

Only two students from Empire Vale sat all components of the NAPLAN tests in literacy. The group size is too small to report specific results without identifying individual students. However it can be noted that in all aspects of the literacy assessment – reading, writing, spelling and punctuation and grammar – the school’s average result was considerably higher than both state and regional averages.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5

Two students also sat the numeracy component of NAPLAN. Both students were in Band 5 or higher. The school’s average numeracy result of 536 was significantly higher than the regional average of 476 and the state average of 489.

Progress in literacy

The tables below show the progress for students from Year 3 to Year 5 in reading and writing. As can be seen the progress in these areas has been very significant and is well above the state progress and like school groups (LSG). This reflects the new initiatives which were introduced into the literacy program over the past two years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>125.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSG</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>88.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>86.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Progress in numeracy

As can be seen from the table below the students have also made excellent progress in numeracy with progress well above the state and like school groups. New initiatives such as “Mathletics”, Maths Olympiad and applying a more hands on approach in the classroom appear to be yielding excellent results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>121.0</td>
<td>125.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSG</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>83.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Minimum standards
The Commonwealth Government sets minimum standards for reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, spelling and numeracy for years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

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

Percentage of Year 3 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2008
In 2008, 100% of our Year 3 students achieved the national benchmark standards as prescribed by the Commonwealth Government in the areas of reading and numeracy. Eighty nine per cent achieved the national benchmark standard in writing, spelling and punctuation and grammar.

Percentage of Year 5 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2008
In 2008, all our Year 5 students achieved the national benchmark standards for reading, writing and numeracy.

Significant programs and initiatives
Aboriginal education
We continue to include aboriginal cultural perspectives across all curriculum areas. Below are some of the initiatives for 2008.

- Students explored traditional Aboriginal storytelling, including the local Bundjulung dreamtime story ‘Wanja the Echidna’, to help enhance our NAIDOC ceremony.
- During NAIDOC Week the students participated in a wide variety of cultural activities to discover more about Australia’s unique indigenous culture. Educational activities included sharing Dreamtime stories, poetry, appreciating & creating artworks, learning songs, painting boomerangs as well as learning to throw them!
- The Traditional Owners of the land have continued to be acknowledged at all formal events.

Multicultural education
Multicultural perspectives have been incorporated into a number of curriculum areas. Some highlights for 2008 included:

- students in years 4/5/6 learnt about China and Tibet as part of their HSIE studies. Students participated in cooking lessons where traditional Chinese food was prepared in the classroom.
- students from stage 2 & 3 represented the school at the Multicultural Public Speaking competition held at Southern Cross School in Term 2;
- Infants students celebrated the Chinese New Year – Year of the Rat through a variety of craft activities;
- students learnt South American Samba rhythms as part as the Creative Arts Program;
- Infants students learning to maintain a beat with a Multicultural Rhythm Sticks learning resource;

Respect and responsibility
During the year various activities were undertaken by the school to promote respect and responsibility. Students were involved in a number of community service activities. Some of these included:

- participating in Clean Up Australia Day;
- conducting an ANZAC Day ceremony at the school which included Members from the Korea, South East Asia Vietnam Veteran’s Association along with other special guests; and
- participating in numerous charity fundraising days such Cystic Fibrosis and Casual for a Cause Days which were held each term.

The school continues to promote the Peer Support/‘Buddy’ system with the Kindergarten students and Year 6. This initiative is well supported by our students with benefits gained for younger and older children alike.

One student was accepted into the People to People World Leadership Forum. She will join a select group of students in Washington to study leadership where delegates from all over the world will participate in small group discussions and exercises to experience firsthand how successful leaders develop strategies, make decisions, build consensus, and foster change.
Other initiatives

Numeracy

To enhance our numeracy program a number of new mathematical activities were initiated in 2008 which gave students the opportunity to apply their mathematical skills. Some of these are outlined below.

Mathletics

Following a trial subscription last year the Year 4/5/6 continued using the Mathletics and Spellodrome programs. This was possible with funding support from the P&C. These programs helped students to improve their Maths and Spelling results in a fun and educational way. As part of the program students competed in ‘World Maths Day’ which is the world’s largest educational event with 286,392 students from over 98 countries competing live via the internet.

Maths Olympiad

The senior class entered a 5 person team into the Maths Olympiad. The team presented their project on how maths is used in the newspaper industry to a panel of judges at Lismore. The aim of the Olympiad was to:

- introduce students to important mathematical concepts;
- teach major strategies and develop flexibility for problem solving;
- foster creativity and ingenuity and strengthen intuition;
- stimulate enthusiasm and enjoyment for mathematics; and
- provide for the satisfaction, joy, and thrill of meeting challenges.

Our students worked very hard on the challenge and it was an excellent opportunity to extend their mathematical learning opportunities and enhance our mathematical teaching strategies.

Southern Cross Community of Small Schools

Local small schools including, Empire Vale, Cabbage Tree, Wardell, Broadwater, Newrybar, Fernleigh, Pearces Creek, Rous and Tregeagle Public Schools joined together in 2006 to form the Southern Cross Community of Small Schools.

In 2008, Empire Vale students participated in a range of activities throughout the year which were planned by this group. These events included a Spelling Bee, General Knowledge competition, Debating competition and a Chess and Draughts competition. Students thoroughly enjoyed these activities and through participation not only did they learn new skills but extended their peer group.

Empire Vale has also joined the Plateau to the Sea learning community and hopes to provide further opportunities to our students in 2009.

SMASH

Empire Vale students again participated in the highly successful SMASH program. The program challenges students across a range of activities and equipment. The activities are designed to improve hand-eye coordination and the enrichment of gross motor skills, movement, control, perception and teamwork.

The program was conducted for the whole school over ten weeks. The students all found the program very enjoyable and gave them the opportunity to experiment with different equipment.

Premier’s Sporting Challenge

The Premier’s Primary School Sport Challenge aims to engage young people in sport and physical activity and encourages participation. Our students participated in a 15 week sport and physical activity Challenge.

Students’ accumulated time spent in a broad range of sports and recreational pursuits during lunchtime, in-school sport programs, class time, after school or during weekend physical activity. Students recorded their activities in the booklet and gained recognition for their efforts.
Premier’s Spelling Bee
Public schools were invited to participate in the Premier's Spelling Bee. In 2008, students in years 3-6 were involved in a number of activities to enable teachers to choose our representatives. Finally four students (two from Stage 2 and two from Stage 3) were selected to compete.

Premier’s Debating Challenge
Our Stage 3 students participated in a debating workshop which helped them prepare for the Premier's Debating Challenge which was held later in the year. A number of senior students competed in the challenge and gained great skills in this area.

Environmental Education
Environmental Education was another key area which was addressed in 2008. Some of the activities which the students were part of included:

- Rous Water conducted the ‘Every Drop Counts’ program at the school. This program encourages student participation in water conservation at school and at home.
- Students in the senior class showed their community spirit by participating in the Clean Up Australia Day campaign.
- Students planted tress as part of National Tree Day.
- The NSW Fire Service conducted its ‘Firewise’ program for Year 2/3 students. The program aimed to instruct children about safe fire behaviour and survival skills in the event of a fire.

School context
Empire Vale Public School is situated in a rural environment south of Ballina.

The school provides a wide range of educational experiences in the six key learning areas (KLAs) catering for the intellectual, physical, social and emotional development of our students.

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
Student enrolments have been relatively consistent over the past five years with enrolments between 50 and 60 students.

In 2008 the school enrolled slightly more boys than girls which has been the case in previous years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student attendance profile
Average daily attendance at Empire Vale is in line with that of the region and slightly below that of the state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>92.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>92.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 2008 class size audit conducted on Tuesday 25 March 2008.

<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>Kinder 1/2</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2/3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4/5/6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Structure of classes

Classes were formed to best suit the needs of students not only in terms of class size but also in addressing the learning stages of the curriculum.

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

During 2008 staffing at Empire Vale Public School was approved by the Department as set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1 (teaching)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning</td>
<td>0.1 (3hrs p/wk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>0.168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.562</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Teachers Aide (special) was employed in 2008 on a part-time basis to assist students under integration funding support.

The school has a School Administrative Manager as well as a part-time School Administrative Officer to provide administrative support.

A General Assistant is employed at the school one day per week to oversee maintenance issues and the school grounds.

Staff retention

During the year one permanent staff member transferred to another school. This position was subsequently filled by casual teachers until the recruitment process was finalised.

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 97.1%.

Teacher qualifications

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</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: 30/11/2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Expenditure**                        |
| Teaching & learning                   |
| Key learning areas                    | $ 10,741.49    |
| Excursions                             | $ 6,923.85     |
| Extracurricular dissections            | $ 8,410.94     |
| Library                                | $ 534.48       |
| Training & development                | $ 5,890.86     |
| Tied funds                             | $ 60,699.28    |
| Casual relief teachers                 | $ 5,617.34     |
| Administration & office               | $ 33,352.05    |
| School-operated canteen               | $ 0.00         |
| Utilities                              | $ 5,387.60     |
| Maintenance                            | $ 4,246.83     |
| Trust accounts                         | $ 2,743.20     |
| Capital programs                       | $ 7,000.00     |
| **Total expenditure**                  | $ 151,547.92   |
| **Balance carried forward**            | $ 89,304.18    |

Balance carried forward to 2009 includes committed funds of:

- Unpaid orders/invoices : $ 3,840.00
- Unpaid staffing account : $ 301.00
- Tied Funds : $ 51,540.44
- Staffing Contingencies and : $ 2,242.00
- Provision for additional assets : $ 21,000.00
- Asset replacement : $ 10,000.00

General purposes funds remaining: $ 379.26

A full copy of the school's 2008 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.
Progress on 2008 targets

Targets for 2008

The Southern Cross Community of Small Schools had agreed to focus on science as one of the key learning areas in 2008.

Numeracy continued to be a main area of focus with emphasis on developing numeracy skills in the middle years for easy transition to Year 7.

Target 1
To improve student outcomes and enjoyment in science

Strategies to achieve this target include:
- the development of a scope and sequence to ensure proper coverage of information;
- professional training opportunities be given to staff to increase and improve classroom methodology and practices for teaching science;
- providing monetary support where appropriate for new resources to enhance learning opportunities; and
- incorporating science related activities as part of the Southern Cross Community of Small Schools network.

Our achievements include:
- completion of a scope and sequence for science;
- all staff attendance at a Science and Technology Syllabus Development Workshop, gaining a preview of the educational direction of this key learning areas and having the opportunity to provide professional input towards the creation of the new Science and Technology K-6 Syllabus;
- attendance at the launch of the Draft Science policy and staff contributions to the consultative process via a survey;
- conduct of two “Fizzics” Education days for students;
- an afternoon show being conducted by Questacon where we invited participants from other small schools;
- science was our focus for Education Day;
- improved/varied classroom activities and strategies for teaching science;
- improved student engagement in science based activities; and
- the purchase of more science equipment and a dedicated science cupboard in the teacher resource area.

Target 2:
To improve student outcomes in numeracy

Strategies to achieve this target include:
- ongoing professional training opportunities to be given to staff to increase and improve classroom methodology for teaching numeracy;
- purchasing of resources where appropriate to enhance learning opportunities;
- evaluation and analysis of National Skills Test data when available;
- regular review of numeracy resources to ensure all staff are aware of resources available within school and externally to enhance learning; and
- resource and information sharing across classrooms to improve communication and ensure consistency across stages.

Our achievements include:
- excellent progress results in numeracy from Year 3 to Year 5;
- attendance at dedicated training sessions on numeracy particularly in relation to developing numeracy skills for transition to high school;
- purchasing new resources for teaching numeracy and reviewing existing resources to maximise their usage in the classroom;
- an improvement in numeracy results in school based assessment;
- reviewing programs and lesson plans to improve and vary classroom strategies for teaching numeracy;
- senior team participation in Maths Olympiad to provide further maths learning opportunities;
- providing feedback and information to parents through the newsletter on initiatives such as “Mathletics” to ensure maximum student participation; and
- changes to teacher interviews to ensure they provide information on what students are doing in numeracy.
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 planning and science.

Educational and Management Practice Planning

Background

The formation of the Southern Cross Community of Small Schools (SXCSS) has provided the opportunity for an integrated strategic approach to be taken across a range of areas.

In 2008, the collegiate highlighted planning as a key area for evaluation.

Findings and conclusions

As part of the planning process, staff reviewed program areas to determine how activities undertaken by the SXCSS could best be integrated into key learning areas to maximise the learning opportunities for the students.

This integrated approach was adopted for all planning sessions.

Anecdotal feedback from staff and members of the SXCSS has been extremely positive with all recognising the benefits of utilising this forum to plan key activities and ensure best outcomes can be achieved from the process.

Future Directions

Regular staff meetings and sessions with members from the SXCSS will continue to be held. Planning across key learning areas will include activities to be undertaken as part of the SXCSS and the Plateau to the Sea members.

Curriculum

Science

Background

In 2008 the Southern Cross Community of Small Schools collegiate nominated science as a key focus area for 2008.

Findings and conclusions

During 2008, teachers at Empire Vale have focussed on science as a priority area. Programs and lesson plans have been reviewed to look at ways in which the science component can be amended to improve the learning outcomes for the students.

The aim is to ensure all aspects are covered as well as ensuring the teaching method is rewarding and interesting to students. As a result, a scope and sequence have been developed and opportunities such as “Fizzics” and Questacon have been utilised to give students hands on science experiences.

Parent understanding was also identified as being important to enhance the learning outcomes for students. To address this area, science was the main focus for our Education Day activities.

Future directions

Professional development and learning was also seen as an important area for focus. To address this, resources will be made available to staff to participate in professional learning when opportunities arise. A full day of Science Professional Learning Day has been planned for 2009 which will also include other staff from the Southern Cross Community of Small Schools.

We will also continue to explore other initiatives and opportunities for our students in this area to enhance learning outcomes as part of the Southern Cross Community of Small Schools network.

Professional learning

The average expenditure per teacher on professional learning was approximately $2 000. Courses for 2008 included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Staff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy in the middle school –full year</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting them started early – full year – numeracy and literacy</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Best Start</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criterion Based Marking - Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spelling (STLA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phonics Awareness (STLA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-violent crisis intervention</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPR</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Play for Life’ sport</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit For The Job challenge</td>
<td>7</td>
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Support staff also participated in training for CPR, and Non-violent Crisis Intervention.

Two administrative staff participated in the Enrolment software course (ERN).

All staff were part of the ‘Fit for the Job Challenge’ which was a 12 week fitness program for all staff focussing on building resilience.
School Development 2009 – 2011

Targets for 2009

With the introduction of a number of new assessment initiatives such as Best Start and NAPLAN over the past couple of years we will be focussing on this area as a target for 2009.

Target 1
To review and improve formal and informal assessment tasks.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- ensuring parents are aware of formal testing requirements such as NAPLAN and Best Start and the benefits for such assessment;
- reviewing Best Start process regularly to see if improvements can be made;
- staff training in assessment techniques and specific training for programs such as Best Start;
- ensuring there are consistent assessment strategies across all stages; and
- ensuring assessment information is incorporated back into lesson plans and programs to improve student outcomes.

Our success will be measured by:

- staff participating in professional learning opportunities in the area of assessment when available;
- development of an assessment strategy which outlines mandatory, optional and suggested assessment tasks across all stages;
- programs being updated to include assessment tasks as outlined in our strategy;
- term reviews by staff of their lesson plans to ensure results from assessment tasks are reflected to improve student learning outcomes.

Target 2
To continue to improve student outcomes in literacy.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- professional development opportunities to be given to staff to increase and improve classroom methodology and practices for teaching literacy;
- providing budget resources where possible for the purchase of new materials to enhance learning opportunities;
- review the school scope and sequence to ensure consistency,
- review of NAPLAN results and identifying areas of need; and
- further extension of work and tasks in the area of text types.

Our success will be measured by:

- staff participating in professional learning opportunities in the area of literacy and NAPLAN follow-up when available;
- staff consistency in the teaching of literacy; and
- a shared metalanguage.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2008 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.

Education Day provided parents with the opportunity to view the school and its culture. Feedback from parents and teachers was extremely positive with many highlighting the community spirit as a great attribute of the school.

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: http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/asr