

Bullimbal Public School for Specific Purposes Annual School Report 2013



School context

Bullimbal School for Specific Purposes celebrated its third birthday in its current location on the 12th of May in 2013. School numbers have grown and our seventh class was established at the beginning of the year. Our school caters for students with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities and their progress is assessed through curriculum-based assessment that is organised and delivered by our teaching staff. Parents of those students who were in the National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) chose exemptions from these tests this year, due to their child's intellectual disability. It is pleasing to report that teaching staff were able to demonstrate progress of each of their students at Planning and Review meetings conducted for our students during the year.



Our school continues to be involved with the Live Life Well @ School program as we continue to work towards healthy eating and lifestyles for our students. This program will continue in 2014 as we restructure our garden to incorporate a chicken house and fruit trees.



The integration of technology into teaching and learning continues to be a focus and during 2013 additional staff meetings were held every second week, which specifically focused on technology as a tool to enhance classroom activities.



Principal's message

As I look through our Annual School Report I realise what an extremely busy year we have had in 2013. I am pleased to report that teaching and learning programs, personalised learning and support plans and professional learning of staff have been the central focus of our work during the year.

Our school is continuing to develop the Four Blocks to Literacy program and staff, students and parents are all reporting that the greater emphasis on literacy has increased the expectations that we have regarding the performance of our students. We must continue to have high expectations across all areas of the curriculum.

Our school continues to grow and in 2014 we are expecting enrolments to be fifty students. This is the time to be so thankful that during the planning stage of our new school we were successful in having eight classroom spaces in our plan. This will allow our growth to be absorbed with the correct amount of classrooms and staff.

During 2013 our small but fantastic P&C have been able to assist in raising funds to build a shade sail over our playground equipment. Of course we are all very grateful to the hard working Pam Pavey who, with her helpers, raised funds not only through our Boot Sale but through spending hours outside shopping centres selling raffle tickets. Our thanks to Pam.

During 2013 I was fortunate to represent our region through involvement on the Primary Principal Association Schools for Specific Purposes Reference Group. This group has face-to-face access to senior departmental officers and allows us to discuss and work through issues, which our school's face on a day-to-day basis.

As always our 2013 Annual School Report highlights the achievements of our school during the year but also outlines areas for improvement.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of rigorous school self-evaluation and is a balanced and genuine account of the schools achievements and areas for development.

Mal Donald

Principal

P & C and/or School Council message

Our P&C have been very busy raising much needed funds for our school, culminating in our epic December boot sale which saw a total of \$5,936.88 being raised.

A huge part of December's success was thanks to the efforts of Pam Pavey, her dedicated team of volunteers and supportive husband Michael Pavey. All in all our stall holders and volunteers always do an amazing job throughout the year and we are thankful for their support.

The shade structure has been erected over the play area and is looking lovely. A dedication plaque and small celebration are being planned.

Over the year we have had our boot sales and these will continue into 2014 with an addition to fundraising being the Bunning's community BBQ's. If you are able to volunteer some time to these please see the P&C. They will be held mostly on Friday's to enable students to help where able and appropriate as part of their life skills cooking lessons.

Bunning's also helped last year with a car load of plants and items for our sensory garden and it is coming along nicely. The gardens are looking good after an overhaul, many thanks to Chandlers for their generous donation of much needed mulch.



The P&C thanks everyone for their support as we continue to support our school into 2014 and beyond.

Marie Barder

P & C President

Student information

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

Student enrolment profile

Gender	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	23	27	30	31
Female	12	11	12	13

Structure of classes

As can be seen by the previous table the school population has been continuing to increase especially since we have moved into our new school. It is anticipated that our school population will continue to grow in 2014 to 49 students.

Each class has been staffed by a teacher and a School Learning Support Officer. Again our staffing was supplemented by regional and state funding to allow for supplementary funding for additional School Learning Support Officers to work on different classes at different times. During the second semester of 2013 funds from Empowering Locals Schools was used to further supplement allocations of School Learning Support Officers to our classes.



Management of non-attendance

Non-attendance is managed at our school with the assistance of the Home School Liaison Program. Student absences and reasons are noted daily in the class roll. Unexplained absences are followed through with requests made to parents for them to provide reasons for student's absences.

The health needs of some of our students are taken into account regarding their absences. Any exemptions from school are organised by the principal.

Rolls are checked regularly by Home School Liaison Officers based in Tamworth with the Department of Education and Communities.

Post-school destinations

Two students completed their Higher School Certificates in Life Skills in 2013 and proceeded to post school placements with various service providers. These students and their parents chose post school service providers that would best suit their individual needs of students.

One of these students moved from Tamworth at the conclusion of Term Three and the other student was involved in a transition program to their new placement in Fourth Term.

Workforce information

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

Workforce composition

Position	Number
Principal	1
Assistant Principal(s)	2
Classroom Teacher(s)	5
Teacher Librarian	0.2
Itinerant Support Teacher (Transition)	1
Teacher (Relief from Face to Face)	0.8
Priority Schools Fund Teacher	0.1
School Counsellor	0.05
School Administrative & Support Staff	1.4
School Learning Support Officers	7
Total	18.55

The Australian Education Regulation, 2013 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce.

During 2013 Bullimbal had no staff that identified as Aboriginal.



Teacher qualifications

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

Qualifications	% of staff
Degree or Diploma	100
Postgraduate	100

Staff retention

All permanent staff were retained at Bullimbal School in 2013 with the exception of one of our Assistant Principals who was seconded by the Department of Education and Communities to work as a Project Officer on the Every Student Every School project.

Financial summary

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

Date of financial summary	30/11/2013
Income	\$
Balance brought forward	216979.50
Global funds	147179.93
Tied funds	206494.78
School & community sources	31698.90
Interest	6098.22
Trust receipts	10104.95
Canteen	0.00
Total income	618556.28
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	3432.54
Excursions	1970.38
Extracurricular dissections	23178.19
Library	968.13
Training & development	10273.62
Tied funds	185524.46
Casual relief teachers	29745.31
Administration & office	27006.02
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	75446.42
Maintenance	15080.44
Trust accounts	5185.24
Capital programs	0.00
Total expenditure	377810.75
Balance carried forward	240745.53

A full copy of the school's 2013 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council and/or the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2013

Achievements

Arts

In 2013 Bullimbal maintained our participation in the Musica Viva in Schools Program, hosting two performances. The Latin American group Tigramuna brought ancient musical traditions of the Andes and Afro, Cuban and European dance styles such as the cha-cha-cha. Students experienced the haunting tones of the panpipes, the diversity of the saxophone, a variety of guitars and of course the bongos and other drums. Students from Oxley Vale Public School joined us for this performance. This wonderful event was augmented by classroom experiences in listening, playing and dance.



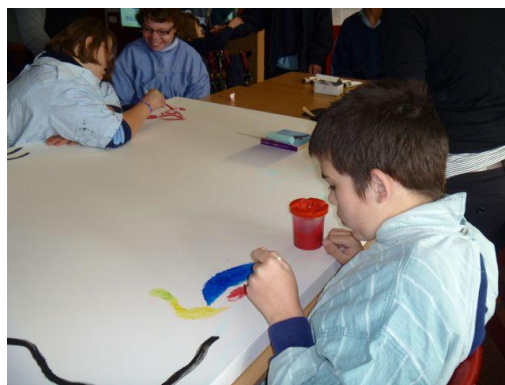
We were also delighted to welcome Blake Saban and Glendon Finlay who entertained students with a lunchtime concert. Many students wanted to join in the singing, adding some percussion and dancing with the staff.

Whilst we were unable to participate in CAPERS this year, students thoroughly enjoyed attending the matinee performance of this great event.

Tamworth TAFE Youth Links students donated drums they had made. These were presented to the school in a vibrant and exciting demonstration. The cajons are a welcome addition to our music resources. It is anticipated that Youth Links participants may return for more drumming workshops at Bullimbal.



Middle school students participated in the painting of a fabulous work of art during Naidoc Week. Led by Kate Armstrong from Tamworth Regional Art Gallery with Pearl Slater and Megan Naden and expressing personal styles and handprints, this painting was on display in Ray Walsh House and now hangs in our hall.



Students' work was also displayed at the Tamworth Show, where they received many prizes.



Another project involving all students was the tree mural in the playground. Community volunteer Anna Treneman incorporated the students' ideas, choice of content and colour into her striking design. The students helped paint the wall which is now ready for individual and small group free drawing with chalk during playtime.

Many classes explored digital photography using class iPads and cameras. Technology was also used in photo editing and making slide shows.

Each class again presented a Cineliteracy project. Some were educational, with a healthy message through a Masterchef presentation, others entertaining with cute Smurfs and pesky pirates. These projects are a core focus of our arts and literacy programs, culminating in our popular Presentation Night premiere.

Sport

Our annual sports carnival was held in Term Four. The much anticipated event was attended by 95% of the students. Students, dressed in house colours, participated in various events from traditional track and field events through to novelty events.



The City of Light Lion's Club brought Dream Cricket to Bullimbal in 2013. Students participated in a day of learning a range of cricket skills. The club then donated a cricket kit to the school for students to use during Physical Education Lessons.



The Adidas Fun Run was again on the Bullimbal Sporting Calendar in 2013. Students, their family and friends attended the event promoting fun and fitness.

The senior students attended the Multisport Day at the Sportsdome during term III. They participated in a variety of sports including golf, cricket and AFL. Some senior classes also went Tenpin bowling at the end of the year to experience another field of sport.



Twenty of our students attended Riding for the Disabled during the winter months with students learning a variety of skills from balance through to independent riding.

Port Stephens excursion

In 2013 five students from the senior class travelled with four staff to Port Stephens for the annual Senior Excursion. The students assisted with researching the various tourist attractions and associated differences between coastal and inland environments.

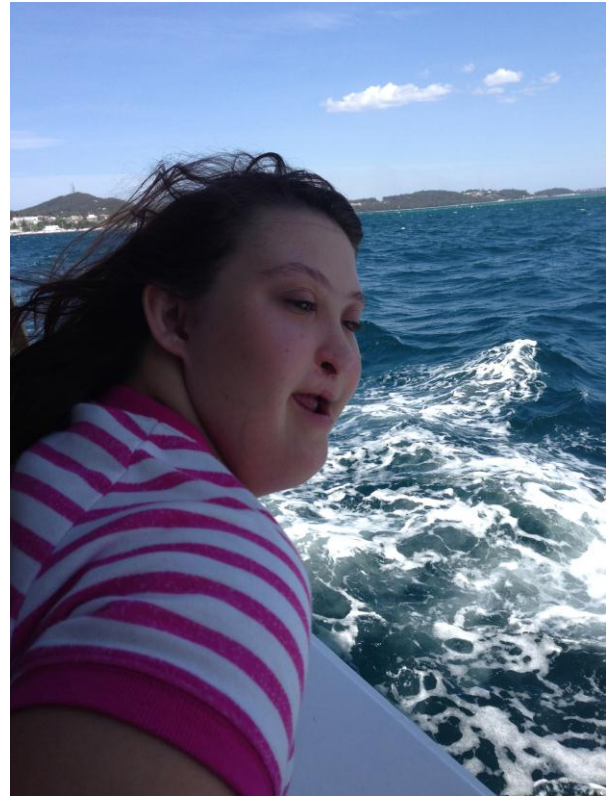
Excursion highlights include feeding stingrays and sharks at the Australian Shark and Ray Centre, visiting Oakvale Farm & Fauna World, going

dolphin watching, enjoying striking 360 degree views from the Gan Gan Lookout, picnic at the lighthouse, playing on the beach and dining out at the Nelson Bay Bowling Club.



Thank you to Allyson for researching and organising the bookings for the excursion, especially finding suitable, self-contained accommodation. We stayed at One Mile Beach Holiday Park and the cabins were private, spacious and comfortable after long days exploring Port Stephens.

Thank you to Fiona Hemmings of Fiona's Minibus for donating the hire of the minibus and trailer. The class also greatly appreciated the donation from the P&C and the many people who assisted in various fundraising projects that made the excursion a wonderful and exciting experience for all.



Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal and Multicultural Education

During NADOC Week, Kate Armstrong from the Regional Art Gallery and local Elders came to Bullimbal to work on an art project with some of our students. This involved the production of an inspiring piece of traditional artwork that now proudly hangs in our school hall.

Again our students celebrated Harmony Day, which celebrates the cultural diversity of our country.

Other programs

Priority Schools Program

Background

In 2013 Bullimbal continued to receive Priority Schools Program (PSP) funding. This funding enabled support for Literacy and Numeracy programs across the school. The funds were used to supplement our staffing so that extra support to all students was available to help improve Literacy and Numeracy outcomes. A supplementary teacher allocation (0.1) was also provided through PSP funding.



Findings and Conclusions

In 2013 the implementation of the Priority Schools Program and associated funding has resulted in:

- The continued provision of extra School Learning Support Officer (SLSO) staffing supplementation resulting in extra time spent on teaching and learning activities.
- The purchase of additional specialised teaching resources to support Literacy programs for students with intellectual disabilities including the Four Blocks to Literacy program and related assessment materials (and other software).

- The release of staff for professional development on the literacy program 'Four Blocks to Literacy' and programming development on this new resource in our school.
- Inter school visit to Willans Hill SSP, Wagga Wagga, for staff training, program development and sharing of resources.

Future Directions:

In 2014 the school will continue to improve and expand its PSP program through:

- The continued SLSO staffing supplementation to support each student's individual Literacy and Numeracy programs.
- The release of staff for professional development in standardised assessments in Literacy.

National partnerships and significant Commonwealth initiatives

Empowering Local Schools National Partnerships

In 2013 Bullimbal School was involved in the Empowering Local Schools National Partnership initiative.

This partnership allowed the school to work with a greater level of school based decision making and with additional budget support in the areas of Workforce and Governance.

Workforce Initiative

Our school is staffed on a staffing formula and not on student needs. The Workforce initiative allows our staff and students a greater level of safety and allows teaching staff more teaching time by allocating support staff based on student need and not numbers of students.

Rationale

Employment of additional School Learning Support Officers to assist with Curriculum delivery, Personal Care, Mobility, Communication, Social Skills and Behaviour Management of students.



Evaluation

A full and comprehensive evaluation of this initiative and the need for additional School Learning Support Officers were conducted as part of our Educational management practices in the school. This report features in this Annual School Report on Page 11.

Future Directions

At the end of 2013 staff will apply for additional School Learning Support Officer allocations, which will be supported from both school and departmental budgets. The additional support will be evaluated every five weeks.

Governance Initiative

Our school is allocated release from face to face on a primary school allocation. This is inequitable for our teachers of secondary aged students whose counterparts at high schools are allocated more release from face to face time.

Rationale

Rather than employ a third Assistant Principal the gap between a teacher's wage and that of an Assistant Principal would be used to provide teaching staff with more teacher release time.

Evaluation

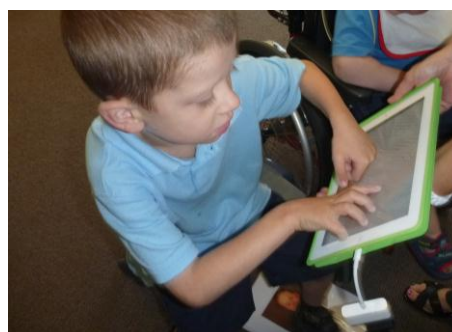
Following lengthy discussions with teaching staff it was decided that the workload on our present Assistant Principals was onerous and further discussions would be needed at the time of the establishment of an eight class to re evaluate the need for a third Assistant Principal. During the remainder of 2013 the additional release time was allocated to our two assistant principals who reported that the additional time was welcomed and allowed them more time to organise professional learning activities, Four Blocks to Literacy staff meetings, organise school technology resources and supervision of teaching staff.

Future Directions

During the early part of 2014 an application for the establishment of an eight class may necessitate the appointment of an additional Assistant Principal.

Every Student Every School National Partnerships

The Every Student Every School National Partnership project has involved the development of an Assistive Technology Assessment Toolbox. This resource will assist regular and support class staff across the region to assess, plan, trial, evaluate and implement appropriate individualised assistive technology for students with complex learning needs. Through the use of the Toolbox, students will be able to better access the curriculum resulting in improved student outcomes.



The Assistive Technology Assessment Toolbox will incorporate:

1) a range of assistive technologies including hardware, software, and low-tech options (eg. iPad, computer switch interface, speech output devices, aided language displays);



2) an extensive assessment framework for evaluating student needs in the area of assistive technology based on the principles of the Student Environment Tasks and Tools (SETT) framework;

3) strategies and proformas for incorporating technology into Individual Learning Plans;

4) a range of training materials to support the use of assistive technology with students with disabilities. Training materials will be a combination of print and video based materials that will be accessible via a website.



School planning and evaluation 2012—2014

School evaluation processes

NSW Public Schools conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan. The processes used at Bullimbal School to gain this information include:

- Written surveys
- Oral surveys
- Electronic surveys
- Small focus groups

Program Evaluations

Curriculum

Each year the teaching staff at Bullimbal are included in an evaluation of one curriculum area. In 2013 the new Australian English Syllabus was introduced and this provided a perfect opportunity for English to be evaluated in the school.



Background

Teaching staff completed the course: Your School and the English K-10 syllabus. They looked at the organisation of the new syllabus and explored it's content. Teachers explored outcomes relevant to their teaching stages and followed the learning links surrounding each outcome in the continuum of learning.

Teachers then evaluated their capacity to effectively teach the key aspects of the new English K-10 syllabus.

Findings

The team audit revealed that Bullimbal teaching staff brought valuable experience, knowledge and skills to the teaching of the new syllabus. Strengths lay in aspects of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing. Teachers expressed a need for support in the programming of higher order thinking.



The text requirements of the new syllabus specify the teaching of quality literature, literature from other countries and times, texts about intercultural experiences and texts from and about Asia. Some teachers voiced a desire for support in these aspects. All staff were confident to teach Australian literature, including Aboriginal texts, nonfiction, picture books and digital texts, as well as spoken, written and visual texts.

Whilst investigating other aspects of work required for implementation of the new syllabus, 60% of teachers were not confident in creating original resources, including digital resources. Similar numbers would like more training in the application of the Quality Teaching Framework and the Literacy Continuum. Some (40%) teachers need support in planning for effective use of ICT in student learning. Most teachers expressed confidence in every other aspect of teaching programs and units of work, including the development of an action plan, auditing current programs and resources and teaching new or revised units and programs.

Future Directions

- In 2014 Bullimbal teaching staff will reflect on the English Learning Continuum and the Literacy Continuum to inform teaching.
- Audit teaching programs, units of work and resources.
- Recommend augmentation of library resources to satisfy syllabus requirements.
- Continue to work in teams to develop units of work in Four Blocks Literacy, within the English K – 10 syllabus framework and using BOS Program Builder.

Educational Management and Practice

Background

Under funding gained through the Empowering Local Schools National Partnerships program the school was able to enhance School Learning Support Officer (SLSO) staffing allocations to each of the classrooms. This evaluation builds on a similar evaluation undertaken in 2012. This program was deemed so important by staff that as a management practice further work was needed to ensure a quality program with efficient outcomes will be provided for students.

Six classes shared the allocation of three additional hours per day SLSO time between 9.20am and 12.20 pm. One class received four hours per day due to behavioural issues within the class. This additional support was targeted at the following areas:

- Access to the Curriculum
- Personal care and Hygiene
- Social Skills/Behaviour
- Communication
- Mobility

Each teacher was emailed an electronic survey and the results built on a previous survey conducted in 2012.

Findings and conclusions:

Staff were asked what difficulties they faced in their class with the use of just one full time SLSO.

Responses included:

- How difficult it is to provide quality activities in Four Blocks such as writing, self selected reading and also to adequately provide support for students in community access, cooking, cineliteracy, implementing behaviour management, physical management and personal care plans, swimming programs, communication instruction and to teach mobility for students with vision impairment.



When asked if the allocation of three hours per week shared time was enough to satisfy the needs of their students staff six staff responded No, the staff member receiving the four hours per day responded saying Yes.

When asked how much extra time staff would need and what issues would be ameliorated with this extra time staff responded by saying:

- Four hours per day to assist with behaviour support plans, personal care
- Hard to say how much time but extra assistance with Four Blocks to Literacy, community access programs, cooking, cineliteracy is essential .
- I am able to deliver better quality learning programs.

- Two hours every morning. This way all of our students would receive an equal allocation of staff time.
- Extra time in the third session as those students who finish eating their lunch can then receive quality instruction in learning whilst other children finish their lunch.
- Extra time with Four Blocks to support writing, and reading fully during the day.



Staff were asked what had been the most positive outcomes for students through the allocation of more SLSO time to their classes in the second half of 2013. Their responses were:

- Accessing the curriculum particularly the Four Blocks program, implementation of a social skills program and excellent results in a mobility program for a student who is blind.
- Better results in swimming programs, communication skills have increased due to more time devoted to one on one instruction to students, improvement in behaviour and social skills due to more positive practice and better results in Physical Education programs.
- More engagement of students in personalised learning plans.
- A calmer classroom meant a more effective learning environment and each student had enhanced learning outcomes because of this environment.

- More outcomes were achieved in curriculum based activities as well as communication, mobility, personal care and social skills.
- Work for other students continued when one student was tube fed and this led to them achieving better outcomes. Behaviour management programs achieved better outcomes for students and a physical management program for one student had great results.

When asked if the additional SLSO time was being used effectively and what suggestions they may have for ensuring that SLSO time is used effectively staff responded by saying:

- Yes but every class has unique challenges
- There is a need for a pool of well-trained supplementary SLSO who know the needs of the students if the program is to be effective.
- Yes but I feel that the teacher I share the SLSO with is not getting a good deal as I am taking too much time. Therefore we all need one SLSO per class.
- Very concerned that if no funding is available in 2014. Perhaps we need more teacher release to better develop programs.
- Yes it seems to be working well but we need better communication between teachers regarding their use.
- Yes more so in some rooms than others. Teachers need to liaise with supervisors to carefully timetable and think through day plans to maximise the potential of additional personnel.



When asked if the allocation of additional SLSO should continue in 2014 teacher responded overwhelming yes and their reasons for this included:

- Our priority with the Four Blocks to Literacy program will need additional SLSO support if we are to establish this program well in our school,
- With activities such as Community Access, Personal Care, toilet training and cineliteracy extra support is essential.
- Teacher and other SLSO stress levels will increase without this additional support.
- We also need other long-term solutions to be investigated.
- It is difficult for our students to achieve their goals without this additional support.
- Students miss valuable learning time when two staff are involved in personal care or behaviour management.



Future Directions

From this evaluation the following actions will be taken:

- Rigorous application from staff to describe how much additional time is needed and program review every five weeks.
- Application for funding through state and regional processes to secure funding.
- Additional SLSO to work in all classes to gain experience with all students.
- Staff to describe to peers how they are using their additional time. This peer review will allow staff to best understand strategies for efficiency and reflect on how they best use their allocated time.
- Include all supplementary SLSO in Staff Development Day training.

School planning 2012—2014: progress in 2013

The school planning policy provides direction for the preparation and implementation of the school plan including the identification of priority areas, intended outcomes and targets that are consistent with the Departments documents.

2013 saw the second year of the implementation of our School Plan for 2012-2014. The priority areas identified in these programs are:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Transition
- Technology
- Managing the needs of complex students
- Understanding the relationship between behaviour, communication and learning
- Strengthening parent engagement



School priority 1

Improved levels of performance in literacy and numeracy

In 2013 Bullimbal School continued to focus on the ongoing need to ensure that appropriate Literacy and Numeracy activities and assessments were being delivered to the students.



Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:

- The continuation of using the Numeracy Framework Assessment and related activities across the school for consistency of testing student ability in each Mathematics strand;
- A shared drive was set up to assist in the conveying of student academic results to new teachers at the end of each year;
- The 4 Blocks Literacy Program was implemented as a whole school policy and program for teaching literacy;
- A literacy assessment tool was introduced to be used across the school.
- Staff training and development in the implementation of the whole school literacy program was conducted by Jane Farrall and followed up by executive staff at Bullimbal.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- Investigate strategies used in other SSP's in Mathematics.
- Commence implementation of new Mathematics K-10 curriculum.
- Use of Departmental and external websites to support the teaching of literacy.
- Assessment in and use of Alternative and Augmentative Communication systems for all students as appropriate
- Ongoing professional learning in using the new English Curriculum



School priority 2

Managing the needs of complex students

This target aimed at ensuring that all staff would be able to articulate the correlation of communication, behaviour and learning into improved outcomes for students with a decrease of 10% of violent and aggressive behaviours.

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:

- Previously untrained staff in Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS) were shown the practical application of PECS in classroom situations, which allowed students to communicate

effectively their needs and wants. Staff new to Bullimbal reported that further training in PECS would be appreciated

- Students behaviour plans updated and communicated to all stakeholders with a focus on students being involved in learning especially Four Blocks to Literacy
- Quality teaching indicators evident in programs and learning activities. This demonstrated that staff had thought deeply in regards to their teaching and learning programs and were able to ascertain the individual needs of students with greater clarity.
- Social and Procedural stories evident for students. Staff reported a high success rate when these stories were implemented in ensuring that students would behave appropriately at times of change and other times which may cause high levels of anxiety for our students.
- Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training for all staff has led to staff now applying for in-school planning time to develop appropriate behaviour programs for students with this need. During 2014 this process will be monitored to ensure that staff have enough time to not only plan but also discuss student's progress through monitoring data and discussing which strategies are proving successful.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014

- Allocation of supplementary SLSO to assist with behaviour management
- Additional SLSO's employed to assist with students with high support needs in personal care, mobility and communication
- Regular five weekly surveys and discussions to assess the needs of their students and staffing allocation.

Professional learning

Every year our staff are involved in professional learning activities. These activities occur either on our five allotted Staff Development days, after school meetings or at regional or state workshops and conferences. A professional learning budget is allocated for teaching staff.

There are mandatory professional learning activities, which must be completed by staff. During 2013 these activities were:

- CPR and Emergency Care and Defibrillator training
- Anaphylaxis training
- Work place Health and Safety
- Child Protection
- English Curriculum

Further professional learning activities were organised for staff that reflected the priorities that were outlined in our School Improvement Plan.

These activities were:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Managing disturbing behaviour in the classroom
- Culture and Change
- Assessing iPads for students communication
- X-Box and how to relate games to the curriculum
- Physical activities and the school environment
- Four Blocks to Literacy in the classroom

Three staff members attended the State Special Educators Leaders conference in Sydney and a further three staff members visited Willans Hill SSP in Wagga Wagga to learn practical strategies for the implementation of Four Blocks to Literacy in the classroom.

Staff continued attending after school technology meetings every fortnight, which continued to look at new hardware and software and its use in the classroom. Staff were also involved in Learning Management and Business Reform training in Student Wellbeing.

Staff also had training in the Disabilities Discrimination Act and its implications for schools and how to use the Personalised Learning & Support Signposting Tool (PLASST).

Both of these innovations will be put to greater use in 2014.



Parent/caregiver, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2013, the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.

Their responses are presented below.

The thoughts and opinions of parents, students and staff regarding the school and how it operates were sought through various surveys.

Their responses are written below and are presented in three different sections:

All parents were sent written surveys which asked twelve questions regarding aspects of the school and also asked parents to outline what they thought the strengths and in which areas the school could be improved.

Twenty-two responses were received from parents. The responses from parents showed:

- The majority of parents were very proud of the school and agreed that the teaching was very good at the school. One respondent disagreed and felt that the teaching was not good at the school,
- All parents, except for one respondent, agreed that the school works in close partnership with parents and that their child enjoyed coming to school
- All but one parent reported that they felt welcomed when they came to school and that the school took into account their questions and concerns,
- All parents reported that they were kept well informed about their child's progress but one respondent questioned if Planning and Review meetings were being "dissolved" for secondary age students,
- The majority of parents felt that their child was making good progress at school however two reported that this was not the case. Parents felt that their children were always learning new things at school however three respondents disagreed and reported that this was not the case,
- Nearly all parents reported that the school expects their child to work hard and achieve their best. One parent disagreed with this and two were not sure.

Strengths of the school highlighted from this survey were:

- Excellent communication and skilled staff, committed staff and ready to cater for individual difference, the caring way staff treat children, the friendly atmosphere of the school and the strong rapport staff have with parents, excellent facilities and additional funding to support students, the structure and routine provided by staff to students, consistent behaviour management, staff being accessible to answer questions and the welcome BBQ, understanding of children's needs, good social skills programs.



Areas that can be improved:

- Even more formal and informal meetings scheduled with parents and to encourage more parent interaction to occur in the classroom, value parents judgements more especially on behaviour management, more car parking for parents who have children in wheelchairs and ask busses not to block the access to the no parking zone, greater access to the sensory room, more opportunities to socialise with regular students, more funding to support students, school to provide holiday respite, explore the possibility of a school canteen, pedestrian access needs to be made better when buses are arriving and departing from the school and a darker school uniform with another uniform supplier.

Selected students were given an oral survey and their responses showed that:

- Yes they did enjoy coming to school on most days but sometimes not so much,
- Students responded that they did learn new things at school and staff were helpful,
- When asked the best thing about school responses ranged from eating lunch, listening to stories building bird boxes, playing in the sandpit and with friends and using the iPad and X Box.

- Students responded positively about enjoying Friday assemblies but one student only enjoyed Friday Assembly " a little bit".
- Students enjoyed swimming and horse riding and suggested that our playground needed, birdcages, more games, swings, a play shop and a "big fan when it's hot".
- All students responded yes when asked if they felt safe at school.

A further survey will be conducted during early Term II in 2014 which where all students will be surveyed either with an oral or symbolic survey as the results of this survey are limited to students with speech.

Whilst the results of these satisfaction surveys are generally good the school will continue to communicate to parents through the newsletter what is being done at school regarding any areas of concern and suggestions that were forthcoming in the surveys that they completed.



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.

Mal Donald, Principal

Trish Carr, Assistant Principal

Lee Ridden, Assistant Principal (Relieving)

Marie Barder, P & C President

School contact information

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Parents can find more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the report and have the opportunity to provide feedback about the report at:

<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/high-performance/annual-school-reports>