2009 Annual School Report
Soldiers Point Public School

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

Students
The three hundred and sixteen students who commenced the year at Soldiers Point Public School in 2009 have enjoyed success in all areas of their learning. They were actively involved in quality learning experiences that were both positive and challenging. They were encouraged to accept responsibility for their learning and contribute to the greater school community.

Staff
The professional and caring team of teachers at Soldiers Point Public School prepare quality programs and learning experiences which cater for all students. They enjoy the use of excellent resources to assist in providing engaging and practical activities.
The teachers and administrative staff have accessed appropriate and relevant professional learning throughout the year.
All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

Significant programs and initiatives
Soldiers Point Public School continues to consolidate and further develop a number of highly successful programs to support students and to improve student outcomes. These include:
- Student leadership and Student Representative Council (SRC);
- You Can Do It!
- Public speaking and debating;
- Concert and rock band;
- Infant and primary choirs;
- Junior and senior dance troupes;
- Reading Recovery;
- A learning support team, comprising the school counsellor, a teacher representative, a support teacher (behaviour) and the principal to support students with specific learning needs.

Student achievement in 2009

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3
In 2009 fifty-four Year 3 students sat the NAPLAN assessment for literacy. Our school's results continue to be above the state average in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation in Year 3.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3
In 2009 fifty-four Year 3 students sat the NAPLAN Test for numeracy. Our school's results continue to be significantly above the state average in Year 3.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5
In 2009 forty-six Year 5 students sat the NAPLAN Test for literacy. Our school's results continue to be above the state average in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation in Year 5.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5
In 2009 forty-six Year 5 students sat the NAPLAN Test for numeracy. Our school's results continue to be significantly above the state average in numeracy in Year 5.

* Numerous graphs have been included on pages 8, 9 and 10 of this report which reflect the achievement of the students who participated in the NAPLAN testing.
Principal's message

I trust that you find the 2009 Annual School Report an engaging read. In developing this year’s Annual School Report I have endeavoured to represent all dimensions of school life at Soldiers Point Public School.

One of the strengths of this community is the diversity that is clearly evident in the student body, their interests and abilities, as well as the range of educational opportunities they are offered. As you will read, learning takes place both inside and outside the classroom, across a range of curriculum areas.

Our school’s Effective Learning Code was created. This document is grounded in the fundamental values, which represent our school community. The Effective Learning Code will guide and sustain the culture of Soldiers Point Public School in the future.

I know you will enjoy reading about the achievements of our students, which bear witness to our mission statement: Our school community is committed to providing a successful and caring learning environment.

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.

Simon Parson

P&C President’s message

Planning, participation and pride have continued to be key qualities underpinning Soldiers Point Public School during 2009. Students and staff as well as the many parents, friends and family members who help out with activities undertaken by the Soldiers Point Public School P&C Association, constantly displayed these qualities.

Two major planning activities were conducted by the P&C during the year. The first of these reviewed the P&C Constitution and committee structures to ensure the guidelines remain current and relevant. Parents also worked together to develop a Strategic Plan which outlines the objective of the P&C, goals for the next three years and strategies to reach those goals in each of our focus areas: Participation, Communication, Services to the School and Fundraising.

The second planning activity undertaken in 2009 was development of a framework for our school fete. Parents and teachers contributed ideas for this major event, which will involve both the school and the broader Soldiers Point community. A key focus will be to raise funds for the development of Creative Play Spaces as the school grows and the playground environment changes over the next few years. It will also be a great opportunity for the community to participate together in celebrating where we live and learn. The fete will be held 11 September 2010.

During 2009, planning and participation by a broad range of volunteers helped to maintain our school grounds and ensured the uniform shop and canteen continued to provide the school community with these important services. Our volunteers also assisted in planning for and running discos, raffles, BBQ’s and in producing the special Soldiers Point Public School tea towel. With the money raised, the P&C were proud to be able to assist the School with funds to purchase new library furnishings, sheet music for the band, air-conditioning and readers for use in classrooms and at home.

I would like to congratulate and thank all who generously donated their time and energy during the year. The P&C continues to achieve all it does with the considerable assistance and participation of parents, staff and students. I encourage all families to join in the fun of our school community in 2010.

Ruth McLeod

Student representative's message

Over the past seven years at Soldiers Point our minds have been enriched with knowledge and perspective. We have achieved more than we thought we ever could and have enjoyed every moment we’ve spent at this school. During 2009, Year 6 has raised over $4000.00, which is the greatest amount ever.

The first day we walked through the gates of Soldiers Point Public School it wasn’t an extremely large school, but over the years we’ve been here we have witnessed the school grow. To know the school has become a better learning environment is a great accomplishment.

To have pride and show respect has become a great pledge to remember for we have witnessed this in everyone this year. During February this year, fires ravaged the state of Victoria and as an aid the Student Representative Council produced a fund-raiser for the RSPCA and Victorian Fire Brigade. Knowing that we were part of a major clean up event really made the school proud.

As our captainship ends we would like to wish the Captains of 2010 all the best and hope that they uphold our school’s fantastic reputation.

Jack Hawkins and Jayden Baldwin-Rymer
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
Due to the steady increase in enrolments at Soldiers Point Public School, the school gained a thirteenth class in 2009.

The following graph shows the proportion of male and female students enrolled at the school for the last five years.

![Enrolments Graph](image)

Student attendance profile
Attendance at the school has been consistent with that of the region and state.

![Student attendance rates Graph](image)

Management of non-attendance
Student attendance at Soldiers Point Public School is generally close to state average. Throughout the year several families were successful in applying for an Exception from Attendance to attend a family holiday.

Attendance later in 2009 was relatively poor due to an increased level of sickness throughout the wider school community. Parents are to be congratulated for their support with the procedures associated with the management of swine flu during the winter months.

Partial attendance of students is an area which requires attention with a number of students regularly late for school. To combat this trend, reminders stating school hours and the potential impact of missing school are placed in the school’s newsletter. Additionally, school staff have contacted parents to remind them of their responsibility in getting their children to school on time. This is also reflected in the school’s Effective Learning Code.

The school will continue to closely monitor partial attendance and endeavour to design additional strategies to support parents.

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total per Year</th>
<th>Total in Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KH</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KO</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K/1W</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K/1W</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2E</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2S</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4G</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4G</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3D</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4W</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6B</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6C</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6C</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6M</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6M</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Structure of classes

There were two Kindergarten classes, one composite Kindergarten / Year 1, three Stage 1, four Stage 2 and three Stage 3 classes in 2009. Twelve of the classes were mixed ability and one selective, the Opportunity Class.

Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 teachers organise their literacy and numeracy sessions across the years. This allows for more compact groups with students working at their current level.

The staff acknowledges the wonderful support they receive from parents who regularly assist in their classrooms.

Staff information

Staff establishment

The NSW Department of Education and Training uses a formula based on student enrolments from Kindergarten to Year 6 to determine the number of teaching and non-teaching staff allocations. The adjacent table shows the staff allocation for 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Reading Recovery</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Part-Time Teacher</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Teacher RFF</td>
<td>0.504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Teacher Entitlement</strong></td>
<td>15.424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administration Manager</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative Officers</td>
<td>1.122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Assistant</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Non-teacher Entitlement</strong></td>
<td>2.822</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The school also employs a teacher to lead the school’s concert band and senior choir.

Soldiers Point Public School has two teaching staff that are Aboriginal.

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>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial summary

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary:</th>
<th>30/11/2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>116 615.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>132 259.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>126 996.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>84 799.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>5 023.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>19 978.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>485 672.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Expenditure**             |            |
| Teaching & learning         |            |
| Key learning areas          | 17 880.91  |
| Excursions                  | 29 369.10  |
| Extracurricular dissections | 34 643.95  |
| Library                     | 7 006.40   |
| Training & development      | 8 732.45   |
| Tied funds                  | 102 459.68 |
| Casual relief teachers      | 30 057.37  |
| Administration & office     | 51 582.91  |
| School-operated canteen     | 0.00       |
| Utilities                   | 25 389.42  |
| Maintenance                 | 19 627.98  |
| Trust accounts              | 20 543.90  |
| Capital programs            | 0.00       |
| **Total expenditure**       | 347 294.07 |
| **Balance carried forward** | 138 378.58 |

A full copy of the school’s 2009 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council and/or the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.
School performance 2009

Achievements
Our school is committed to ensuring students have access to a balanced and comprehensive curriculum. We recognise the varying learning styles and talents of our student body and aim to provide inclusive, quality learning programs in all key learning areas (KLAs).

Arts
This year students participated in a school initiative, CAPA Week. CAPA Week was implemented for three main reasons:

- provide a dedicated time across the school for teaching of Creative and Practical Arts (CAPA);
- promote student achievement; and
- enhance parent awareness of Creative and Practical Arts programs.

During CAPA Week, students interacted with others from different classes. Examples of the media students had the opportunity to learn about included: drama, pottery, puppets, sewing, masks, environmental art, photography, batik and tie dying.

Parent volunteers collaborated with teaching staff to share their expertise and assist in classrooms with activities. Student achievement was celebrated at the conclusion of the week with a special assembly showcasing their final products. A high level of student engagement was evident each afternoon during CAPA Week, as was a sense of achievement and satisfaction.

In Term Two our students enjoyed a 6-week dance program presented by Footsteps Dance Company. Students from Kindergarten to Year 6 were given the opportunity to learn various routines, including contemporary, hip-hop and partner dances. A disco-style finale gave the students a chance to demonstrate their newly developed skills.

In Term 3, more than 60 students from Years 3 to 6 performed in this year’s colour-themed Music Festival for Tomaree Peninsula schools.

A new addition to the dance schedule this year was a Stage 1 troupe featuring girls and boys from Years 1 and 2. These performers trained under the guidance of four enthusiastic Stage 3 leaders, who choreographed a routine to Pink’s ‘Fun House.’ All of the dance groups performed at this year's Celebration Day assembly.

Six Stage 3 students attended a Drama Camp at Maitland early in the year. The students interacted with children from other schools during the three-day camp. Each group presented a skit at the end of the three days. One of the students, Samantha Kew, was selected to present her group’s skit at a special Drama Festival Night performance for the Regional Director.

Celebration Day continues to be a highlight of the Soldiers Point Public School calendar. It is a day for the school's various Performing Arts groups to perform in front of students, parents and the wider community after months of practice. The primary and infants choirs, concert band, rock band and dancing troupes entertained the audience with polished performances. Their confidence on the stage was impressive.

Whilst enjoying Celebration Day activities and regular weekly assemblies, parents and community members were able to view selected student artworks displayed around the hall. Every class contributed samples of art to the display, which was changed on a regular basis.

This year, our school purchased stage lighting for the hall. The lighting system adds a new dimension to student performances. Staff members have been trained in the use of the lights and are learning how to integrate this resource during a presentation.
Teachers have also been provided opportunities to enhance their skills in CAPA this year. One teacher led a popular workshop with colleagues on photography techniques, two teachers attended Maitland Regional Art Gallery for a course on practical resources and Operation Art, and another attended a three-day music course in Sydney.

Sport

Sport in 2009 at Soldiers Point Public School was successful. Many of the teams entered in knockouts progressed far in their rounds. We had a significant number of students who reached the Zone and Hunter qualifying level. Students participated in a variety of sporting activities, which include:

The school’s successful athletics, swimming and cross-country carnivals attracted the involvement and support of parents. All students were given the opportunity to practice and contest the athletics field events. Our Soldiers Point team finished in the top few schools in the Port Stephens Zone Athletics Carnival.

The school’s rugby league team entered the Nelson Bay Inter-school challenge and performed well in their PSSA knockout game.

The boys’ softball team, who were Hunter champions, reached Round 6 and were unlucky with illness and injury depleting the team for the final game.

The adjacent table indicates the levels that students competed at various trials and competitions of the primary schools sports association (PSSA).

More than 120 students participated in swimming activities, including the very successful Intensive Swimming program.

### Sport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Hunter</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-country</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netball</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Rules</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby League</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other

Each year students in Stages 2 and 3 are given the opportunity to participate in the University of NSW Australasian Schools Competitions. Students took part in the English, Mathematics, Science, Computer Skills, Writing and Spelling tests. As can be seen in the table below, our results indicate a high level of achievement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Credit</th>
<th>Distinction</th>
<th>High Distinction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Skills</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In September, three students: Jazmyn Wood, Callum Donnolley and Samantha Kew were involved in the Premier’s Spelling Bee for the Hunter / Central Coast Region.

Students in Years 5 and 6 were once again involved in the Newcastle Permanent Mathematics Competition. In 2009 four students, Madeline Meagher, Liam Browne, Griffin Del Caro and Harry Richards, were placed in the top 100 students for their respective years. All were invited to attend the Primary Mathematics Camp at Myuna Bay.

A Kindergarten student, Abbey Barr, was successful in winning both, Port Stephens Zone and Hunter / Central Coast Regional Public Speaking Competitions.
Academic

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in the assessments.

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

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3

In 2009 fifty-four students in Year 3 sat the NAPLAN test in literacy. Overall, the literacy results indicated that our school’s overall average for its 2009 literacy results was at or above that of the Like School Group (LSG) and state averages.

The following graphs indicate the school’s results in reading, writing and spelling.

Our analysis indicated that our Year 3 girls achieved at a higher level than our boys in literacy.
Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3

In 2009 fifty-four Year 3 students sat the NAPLAN Test for numeracy. Our school’s results continue to be significantly above the state average in Year 3, which is a strong result.

The graph above demonstrates the strong results in reading.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5

In 2009 forty-six Year 5 students sat the NAPLAN Test for literacy. Our school’s results continue to be above the state average in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation in Year 5.

The following graphs indicate the school’s results in reading, writing and spelling. The school has achieved excellent results in reading and spelling, however, more work needs to be done with writing.

In 2010 writing will continue to be a school focus area.
Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5

In 2009 forty-six Year 5 students sat the NAPLAN Test for numeracy. Our school’s results continue to be significantly above the state average in numeracy in Year 5. Our 2009 numeracy results are the highest achieved at Soldiers Point Public School.

Progress in literacy

The measurement of progress in literacy and numeracy between Years 3 and 5 often appears to be lower for students of Soldiers Point compared to their peers across the state. This is due to the fact that our Year 3 results are usually above state average.
Minimum standards

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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 3 students achieving at and above minimum standard</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 5 students achieving at and above minimum standard</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant programs and initiatives

The Soldiers Point Public School staff regard the following areas as a clear indication of the many strengths of our school and of the powerful effect that these areas have in developing essential attitudes, awareness and skills in our students. We believe these to be evident in the day-to-day life of the school.

Aboriginal education

During 2009 Soldiers Point Public School continued to implement Aboriginal Education programs educating and generating awareness of Aboriginal culture. Teaching and learning programs incorporated Indigenous content as integrated aspects of various units of work studied.

An initiative, the Norta Norta Program, was introduced to support Indigenous students in the classroom. This program focussed on Year 4 and Year 6 students, trying to improve their academic skills by using an Indigenous tutor in the classroom.

The community acknowledged NAIDOC celebrations with an Indigenous performer, Phil Geia, demonstrating and explaining Aboriginal lifestyle through dance, song, instruments and artwork. It was an interesting educational experience and students were engaged throughout the performance.

In Term 3, Indigenous students and their families attended an Indigenous Youth Day, “Close the Gap” at Newcastle Energy Stadium. Learning and playing traditional Aboriginal games taught by Aboriginal elders was the focus as well as meeting Newcastle Knights’ players and learning some Rugby League skills. This day was a great opportunity to connect with other Aboriginal people from the community.

Multicultural education

One of our school's guiding principles is, “as a school community we will value a spirit of respect and tolerance for each individual.” It is important to give our students a broader perspective of multicultural Australia. In classrooms, students learn about the culture and customs of different countries around the world.

Programs are designed to develop all students in the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for a culturally diverse society.
Environmental education

Soldiers Point Public School continued to have an extensive recycling program, with items such as paper, toner cartridges, mobile phones and food scraps being recycled on a regular basis.

Students actively participate in various community environmental programs throughout the year, including Tree Planting Day, which involved students from Kindergarten to Year 6. Stage 1 students planted trees in the Mambo Wetlands again this year and Stage 2 participated in Bugwatch.

The school received an environmental grant from Port Stephens Council for the development of a koala friendly habitat that includes access poles over fences as well as tree planting.

The frog habitat remains healthy with three species of frogs frequenting the area regularly.

The many activities students regularly participate in, especially the hands-on activities, continually enhance the students’ appreciation of their local environment and their understanding that they can make a difference.

Soldiers Point Public School was also successful in its submission to build a cascading biodiversity garden. The garden will not be built, however, until the new administration facility and car park are completed later in 2010.

Progress on 2009 targets

In order to achieve the long-term goals of our School Management Plan each year the school develops an Annual Action Plan. This plan provides the school and community with focussed improvement initiatives and strategies, including staff professional learning and resources. Some focus areas need to be established for more than one year to ensure lasting change.

Target 1

*Increase the number of students at proficiency standard in writing*

Our achievements include:

- Focussed professional learning opportunities for teachers improving sentence structure, visual literacy in writing and identifying an effective narrative complication and resolution;
- Teachers regularly and collaboratively trialling, sharing and reflecting on their teaching practices for writing;
- NAPLAN writing results indicating 85% of Year 5 students are in the top three skill bands for writing;
- NAPLAN writing results indicating 79% of Year 3 students are in the top three skill bands for writing; and
- Best Start was introduced for Kindergarten students.

Target 2

*Increase the number of students at proficiency standard in reading*

Our achievements include:

- Focussed professional learning opportunities for teachers identifying the features of a non-fiction text, interpreting figurative language and identifying cause and effect;
- Teachers regularly and collaboratively sharing and reflecting on teaching practices for reading;
- Best Start was introduced for Kindergarten students;
- NAPLAN reading results indicating 77% of Year 3 students are in the top three skill bands for reading; and
- NAPLAN results in reading indicating 76% of Year 5 students are in the top three skill bands for reading.
Target 3

Delivery of an effective transition from preschool to Kindergarten

Our achievements include:

- Active involvement with the Tomaree Peninsula Early Childhood Teacher’s Network. This network strengthens links and communication between local primary schools and prior to school services. Soldiers Point Public School, together with the Early Childhood Teacher’s Network, conducted a combined Starting School Expo for parents with children beginning school on the Tomaree Peninsula in 2010.

- In the lead up to starting Kindergarten, we offered three storytime afternoons. Whilst the pre-school children enjoyed a story and craft activity in the classroom, parents were introduced to a range of personnel and support services offered in the school. This is also a fantastic opportunity for new parents to meet other parents and P&C representatives. All three storytime sessions were well attended.

- During Term 4, prospective students participated in two mornings of orientation. The children experienced a range of school activities during these morning sessions, including literacy and numeracy-based lessons.

- Parents were given an opportunity to learn about school culture at Soldiers Point Public School at an information night. The Home-School Liaison Officer, current Kindergarten teachers, the school principal, parent representatives, and volunteers presented talks from the P&C, school canteen and uniform shop.

- As an additional opportunity for the children and parents to meet others attending our school in the following year, we also run a pre-school playgroup. Our school’s Defence Transition Aide facilitates the playgroup. We were able to conduct two playgroup sessions this year. The playgroup is a friendly and relaxed way for parents and children to interact positively before beginning school.

Key evaluations

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2009 our school carried out evaluations of student welfare and personal development, health and physical education (PDHPE).

Educational and management practice

Student Welfare

Background

The staff and wider school community have long grappled with the many and diverse aspects of student welfare. The school community has developed numerous policies over the years; however, the desire was to create one holistic code, which acknowledges the connection between student welfare and learning.

Findings and conclusions

Throughout 2008 and 2009 staff and the school’s School Improvement and Finance Committee developed a document, which is now known as Soldiers Point Public School’s Effective Learning Code.

The document is holistic in that it links the school’s mission statement and guiding principles with school-based practice and procedures. It incorporates sections on students’ rights and responsibilities, recognition and behavioural expectations. Additionally, it emphasises the need for mutual respect and communication between home and school.

The draft Effective Learning Code was completed in Term 3 of 2009 when it was available for community consultation. Feedback received has since been included where appropriate.

Future directions

It is anticipated that the Effective Learning Code will be at the core of our school’s culture.

At the commencement of the 2010 school year the Effective Learning Code will be published and distributed to all school families. It will also be made available on the school’s website.
Curriculum
Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE)

Background

Promoting healthy lifestyle choices and equipping our students with skills to live healthy active lives through educational opportunities, is a key target of Soldiers Point Public School. The school has completed a review of the teaching and learning of PDHPE in order to ensure that our programs reflect the needs of the students and that learning opportunities and achievement of PDHPE outcomes are maximised.

Carrying out a review of the school’s PDHPE program was intended to ascertain which areas of the program were working well and areas we might improve.

In order to gain an understanding of how teachers, students and parents saw PDHPE within our school, a number of surveys were completed. The results from this evaluation provided insight into what type of PE experiences the students enjoy and see as worthwhile, along with the ways in which the staff were implementing the PDHPE curriculum, the implications of this key learning area and suggestions for improvement.

Findings and conclusions

The student surveys highlighted that the majority of students enjoy participating in a range of physical activity opportunities in the playground, during PE lessons and after school. In addition the students felt we have enough equipment and that leading an active lifestyle is important. However, it is interesting to note that the number of students who enjoy playing sport significantly decreases with age. While this reflects research conducted across many NSW primary schools and on children within Australia, it is an important finding for our school, as it reminds us that we need to make increased efforts to ensure physical activity is something older students can learn to enjoy.

The staff survey indicated that most teachers believe the school and its teachers are implementing many positive health-related initiatives that are working well, such as Crunch & Sip and You Can Do It. The survey also revealed that all stages meet the requirement to provide a minimum of 2 hours of physical activity each week. In addition, many teachers felt that providing more structured sport opportunities for students to participate in during breaks would be beneficial and were also willing to support this idea.

A survey of student’s weight status in which a sample of 234 students’ height and weight were measured and their Body Mass Index (BMI) calculated was also carried out as part of this review.

The results of this survey indicated that the students at Soldiers Point Public School are similar to those throughout NSW. Our results reported that approximately 25% of students were in the overweight or obese weight range. This is similar to the 23% reported in the 2007 Australian National Children’s Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey. This tells us that our students are not excluded from the concerns in the wider community related to childhood obesity.

Future directions

In our aims to continually promote and support teaching and learning in PE, we applied for and were successful in receiving a Healthy Active Australia grant. This has enabled us to support the implementation of a high quality dance program provided by dance instructors from the Footsteps Dance Company. Students enjoyed learning a range of dance skills and routines in a variety of dance genres including hip hop, contemporary dance and traditional partners dancing.

The funds from this grant have also enabled the school to purchase new equipment to support daily PE, making lessons engaging and supporting the development of many fundamental movement skills. We have also been able to purchase gymnastics mats and trampolines, which will enable our students to experience a wider range of gymnastic activities in a safe and fun way.

Soldiers Point Public School is committed to continually enhancing the learning and teaching opportunities in this key learning area in order to promote healthy life style choices and habits.
Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

Parent opinion on school satisfaction was gathered from a survey distributed in Term 4, 2009. One hundred families were invited to complete the survey with 39% being returned.

The survey contained twenty-eight statements which families could choose to strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or remain neutral. Examples of statements include:

- The school meets the individual learning needs of the students;
- The school has a positive reputation in the community;
- The school has a positive and happy atmosphere; and
- Teachers provide a nurturing learning environment.

The responses were highly supportive, a reflection of the hard work of all staff and of the strong and positive relationship between the school and its community. Some of the findings included:

- 94% of families agreed or strongly agreed that the school had a positive and happy atmosphere;
- 92% of families agreed or strongly agreed that the school’s communication materials are informative and attractive;
- 86% of families agreed or strongly agreed that there is a wide range of extracurricular activities, e.g. music, performing arts.

Some additional comments included:

We love the You Can Do It program, Crunch & Sip, the new student recognition program and communication is much better.

The increased time spent on CAPA activities adds to our children’s enjoyment of school and provides a more rounded education. We think the children who have participated in these new programs, especially since Kinder, will benefit greatly and in the long run so will our school.

Would it be possible next year to have some parent training for those who help in the classroom?

A bike path to the school would be wonderful. I try to encourage exercise but it’s not a safe road.

Professional learning

All professional learning undertaken by staff at Soldiers Point Public School during 2009 was aligned to our School Management Plan. The school invested in excess of $8000.00 on teacher professional learning.

All teachers participated in five school development days throughout the year.

School development 2009 – 2011

Soldiers Point Public School has a number of priorities which will guide the school’s direction for this three-year period. Priorities include:

- Facilitate quality teaching initiatives that increase levels of literacy and numeracy achievement for every student;
- Facilitate quality teaching initiatives that promote student engagement in learning;
- Explore innovations in interactive technologies for teaching, learning and professional development; and
- Provide support and professional learning which builds commitment and capacity.

Each year the school’s Annual Action Plan is thoroughly reviewed and a new plan designed for the following year.

Targets for 2010 include:

Target 1

To improve the literacy achievement of all students - reading

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Providing explicit and systematic teaching of reading across all stages;
- Monitoring consistency and continuity of the school’s programming of reading;
- Collaboratively developing and assessing student work samples within stage groups ensuring consistency;
- Providing professional learning for teachers to gain a deeper understanding of the English syllabus with an emphasis on Learning about Reading; and
- Building teacher capacity to interpret and respond to NAPLAN data in reading.

Our success will be measured by:

- Teachers regularly and collaboratively trialling, sharing and reflecting on their teaching practices for reading; and
- Improved results in class reading assessments and National Testing Reading results.
Target 2
To improve the numeracy achievement of all students.

Strategies to achieve this target include:
- Providing explicit and systematic teaching of mathematics across all stages;
- Collaboratively developing and assessing student work samples within stage groups ensuring consistency;
- Providing professional learning for teachers to improve students’ skills and performance (Count Me In Too); and
- Building teacher capacity to interpret and respond to NAPLAN data.

Our success will be measured by:
- Teachers regularly and collaboratively trialling, sharing and reflecting on their teaching practices for mathematics; and
- Improved results in class mathematics assessments and National Testing Numeracy results.

Target 3
To enhance student engagement.

Strategies to achieve this target include:
- Introducing and monitoring the goals of the school’s Effective Learning Code, particularly the recognition of You Can Do It behaviours;
- Providing professional learning for teachers in better understanding student learning and social needs in the middle years of schooling (Stages 3 & 4);
- Increasing access to technology in the classroom; and
- Collaboratively working with the community to increase student attendance rates.

Our success will be measured by:
- Evidence of the positive impact of the You Can Do It program;
- Evidence of the positive impact of interactive technologies and technology-based curriculum delivery on student engagement; and
- Increased student attendance.

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. Contributors to this report include:

- Ruth McLeod Parent
- Jack Hawkins Student
- Jayden Baldwin-Rymer Student
- Amy Cliff Teacher
- Leonie O’Neill Teacher
- Jeff Gibson Teacher
- Lisa Davies Teacher
- Michael Day Teacher
- Helen Wilson Assistant Principal
- Simon Parson Principal

* Many of the photos displayed throughout the Annual School Report are taken by some of our talented students.

School contact information
Soldiers Point Public School
39 Cromarty Road, Soldiers Point, NSW
Ph: 02-49827151
Fax: 02-49820576
Email: soldierspt-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Web: www.soldierspt.det.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 3696

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: