Our school at a glance

Students
The 309 students attending Soldiers Point Public School in 2008 have enjoyed great success in all areas of their learning. They were involved in quality learning experiences that are 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 learning experiences.

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.

Student achievement in 2008

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3
In 2008 forty-six 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 2008 forty-six 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 2008 forty-two 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 2008 forty-two 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.

Messages

Principal’s message
For 71 years Soldiers Point Public School has been a very important part of its local community. From the time of its establishment, Soldiers Point families have appreciated the school’s ethos; the friendly environment and the way in which it nurtures its students and how much our students love to come through the school gate each day.

The school’s mission statement, Our school community is committed to providing a successful and caring learning environment is at the core of all actions and decisions. Additionally, we live by four guiding principles:

- Provide quality teaching in a quality learning environment
- Promote collaboration through open communication
- Value a spirit of respect and tolerance for each individual
- Encourage lifelong learning and promote healthy lifestyle choices.

The school’s staff is dedicated and hardworking. Making learning stimulating, challenging and relevant, and rewarding is important to our students.

Throughout 2008 our school has aimed to implement the guiding principles and goals of the NSW Department of Education and Training and the values and goals of Hunter / Central Coast Region.

As a school community we are proud of the diversity of opportunities offered to our students and we enjoy celebrating their achievements and successes. Throughout this report there are many examples of the accomplishments of our students, our parents and our staff. We particularly welcome and appreciate the level of parental interest and involvement in our school each year.

It has again been my privilege to lead Soldiers Point Public School in 2008.

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

The Soldiers Point Public School P&C Association congratulates both students and staff on their achievements throughout 2008. These achievements reflected both the Education Week theme, A Love of Learning and the pride students and staff have for Soldiers Point Public School.

Pride in our school also extends to the many parents, friends, and family members who supported the P&C activities, which in turn, contributed to the ongoing success of the school community. The generous efforts of our volunteers during 2008 helped to maintain the school grounds and assisted with obtaining additional funding for further improvements. These voluntary efforts also ensured the uniform shop and canteen continued to provide services operating at a very high standard. Good management and special activities in the canteen during the year raised additional funds to purchase a new freezer and pie oven.

The support and efforts of our families helped the P&C to raise funds and hold social events throughout the year such as the Disco, the Movie Night and several BBQ’s. The major 2008 P&C fundraiser was the successful Raffle and Lawn Bowls Afternoon. The money raised enabled the P&C to assist the school with funds to purchase new classroom resources across all stages, shelving for the library and three portable white board display stands.

Fundraising activities also allowed the P&C to support the school in other ways such as the Tea and Tissues morning tea for family members on the first day of kindergarten, the purchase of coloured wrist bands as part of the You Can Do It rewards program and financial assistance for several students to help meet the costs of representing the school at State level competitions. The P&C was also pleased to provide book vouchers for the Celebration Day Awards and pens as gifts for the departing Year 6 students.

These achievements were only possible with the generous help and involvement of staff, students and families. Participation in activities and events at the school provides benefits to all of us and reflects our pride in the school. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have contributed in 2008 and welcome the ongoing participation of all families in the life of the school during 2009.

Ruth McLeod

Student representative’s message

Over the past year, we have enjoyed the many opportunities that have been offered to us as captains of Soldiers Point Public School. We have had the chance to meet important guests that have visited the school one on one.

We, along with other members of the Student Representative Council have created ideas for fund-raisers for the school, voted on ideas put forward by the stage, teachers and the Parents and Citizens Association. One major decision that was made this year was to introduce the You Can Do It program. Throughout the entire school, this has been a massive success.

Being able to work with the students and teachers of Soldiers Point Public School over the course of the year has been a great pleasure of ours. We will be very sad to leave at the end of 2008 and wish the captains of 2009 the very best of luck.

Charlie Fielder and Zane Butler
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 was reclassified to Primary 3. It is likely to become a thirteen class school in 2009.

<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>147</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

During the year there have been a number of absences due to illness and families taking extended holidays interstate and overseas.

Class sizes
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>1/2E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2E</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2W</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4G</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4G</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3D</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4W</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6A</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6E</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6E</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6M</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6M</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KA</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KO</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Structure of classes
There were two Kindergarten classes, four Stage 1, three Stage 2 and three Stage 3 classes in 2008. Six of the classes were composite. Eleven of the classes were mixed ability and one selective, the Opportunity Class.

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

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

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
The New South Wales 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 table below shows the staff allocation for 2008.

<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>9.00</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 Assistance</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Teacher Entitlement</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.424</strong></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><strong>2.822</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Staff retention
Stable enrolments have ensured that twelve classroom positions have been retained for the 2008 school year.

During the year, one teacher gained a transfer and two were successful in gaining promotional positions. Two new permanent teachers were appointed.

Staff attendance
Staff have access to leave entitlements such as sick leave, maternity leave and long service 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>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>13%</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>30/11/2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>110 259.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>118 737.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>93 759.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>83 626.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>8 724.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>11 580.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td><strong>426 687.58</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
<td>15 093.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>30 541.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
<td>50 550.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>5 808.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
<td>12 833.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>76 070.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
<td>22 369.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
<td>49 394.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>22 008.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>11 184.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>8 851.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>5 365.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>310 072.09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
<td><strong>116 615.49</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A full copy of the school's 2008 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meeting of the parents and citizens association. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.
School performance 2008

Soldiers Point Public School students have achieved outstanding results in a wide variety of areas throughout 2008. The school community congratulates all those students who have achieved their personal best both in and beyond the classroom. We are proud of every one of our students.

Achievements in the Arts

Celebration Day at Soldiers Point Public School was a showcase for all areas of the creative and practical arts (CAPA). Parents, students and community members were entertained by students singing and dancing, as well as our rock and concert bands performing. The hall was decorated with stimulating and varied artworks and students displayed confidence when speaking and addressing the audience. A year of commitment and enthusiasm for the school’s CAPA program was clearly evident in students, teachers and supporting parents.

This year Soldiers Point Public School formed a school Rock Band. It consisted of thirteen members who meet once a week for practice under the guidance of a parent helper, Mrs. Michaela Ewing. They had a repertoire of five songs and performed many of these at our Open Day and Celebration Day. The Rock Band also entered a Talent Quest in the local community and made it to the finals.

The Soldiers Point Public School Concert Band continued to thrive. The eighteen students, from Years 3 to 6, gathered on a weekly basis to rehearse. Students have enjoyed progressing from their beginning tutor books to a repertoire of beginning concert band pieces. Student self satisfaction and enthusiasm is obvious when they have completed many of their favourite pieces, which are regularly requested.

The band had the opportunity to perform for our school at both the Education and Celebration Day assemblies. Their performances were greatly received by all. Killara High School visited in December and selected members from our band had the opportunity to perform with them.

The Primary Choir rehearsed weekly under the teaching and guidance of Mrs Riordan and performed at major school assemblies. In addition the choir also participated at this year’s Born to be Alive Music Festival at the Tomaree Multi-Purpose Centre in Term 4. The choir is supported by more than seventy students from Stage 2 and Stage 3. Our Stage 1 choir performed two items at our Celebration Day and consists of forty students.

Early Stage 1 students have continued to combine for singing. Students are confident with our School Song and the National Anthem. They also performed at the Celebration Day and at the Kindergarten Graduation Ceremony.

In 2008 students have continued to enjoy various drama activities including readers’ theatre, role playing, puppetry, miming and improvisations. Students were able to build upon individual and group roles experimenting with movement and voice skills to interpret everyday situations in order to develop meaning in drama.

Many items were purchased to further explore the use of puppets in drama. Children enjoyed performing behind a new puppet stand with a variety of new puppets. They also created their own shadow puppets using fluorescent paint and cut outs. Through the use of UV lights students were able to develop a shadow puppet performance.

Dancing became a regular feature of our weekly school assemblies. Students have experimented with a wide range of music genre and enjoy expressing themselves through this form of movement and entertainment.

Our dance troupes performed at major assemblies and were a feature of our Celebration Day. Both troupes also performed at the Tomaree Music Festival. Many of the girls had not previously performed for a large audience. The experience was enjoyed by all.
In visual arts, students and teachers became increasingly confident in the use of an extensive range of media when representing real or imagined forms. Artworks are featured in all classrooms. Once again seven new pieces of artwork were chosen and framed for display in our school hall. Further recognition was received by many students who entered a local competition seeking artwork to be featured in a calendar for 2009. Certificates of commendation were received. One piece of artwork was selected for use in the calendar and won the K-2 section.

Students were once again able to create a design for their own personal Christmas Card. This project continues to be highly supported by parents and reinforces the value of individual expression through artwork. Students are always surprised and pleased with the results, therefore increasing confidence in their own abilities.

Our Kiln was regularly used throughout 2008. Three teachers have received training in the operation and safety of the kiln. Stage 3 and Early Stage One have experimented with clay and glazes and have been amazed at the interesting and sometimes unexpected results. Tools have been purchased in order to achieve increased participation and expertise.

Achievements in Sport

2008 was arguably the most successful year Soldiers Point Public School has ever had in sport. Many of our teams entered in knockout competitions progressed far in their rounds. We had a significant number of students who reached Hunter and State level.

The school held 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.

Soldiers Point team was successful in winning the Port Stephens Zone athletics carnival. Two students, Charlie Hoswell and Emily Mulcahy were named champions for their age group.

The school’s rugby league team had a very strong year making it through to Round 5 of the PSSA Knockout. The team was undefeated in the Nelson Bay chapter of the Jarred Mullen Cup, which involved playing teams from across the Tomaree Peninsula and beyond. The team was subsequently selected to play other Hunter school teams in the Jarred Mullen Cup in Newcastle.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Hunter</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-country</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netball</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></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>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby League</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby Union</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Academic

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3 and 5 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 2008 forty-six students in Year 3 sat the NAPLAN test in literacy. Overall, the literacy results indicated that:

- Our school’s overall average for its 2008 literacy results was higher than the Like School Group (LSG) and state averages; and
- As indicated in the graph below, 76.6% of students were ranked in the top three skill bands for reading compared with 67.8% for state.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3

In 2008 forty-six students in Year 3 sat the NAPLAN test in numeracy. Overall, the numeracy results indicated that:

- Our school’s overall average for its 2008 numeracy results was higher than the Like School Group (LSG) and state averages; and
- As indicated in the graph below, 85.1% of students were ranked in the top three skill bands for numeracy compared with 66.6% for state.
Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5

In 2008 forty-two students in Year 5 sat the NAPLAN test in literacy. Overall, the literacy results indicated that:

- Our school’s overall average for its 2008 literacy results was higher than the Like School Group (LSG) and slightly higher than state averages; and
- As indicated in the graph below, 56.1% of students were ranked in the top three skill bands for reading compared with 56% for state.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5

In 2008 forty-two students in Year 5 sat the NAPLAN test in numeracy. Overall, the numeracy results indicated that:

- Our school’s overall average for its 2008 numeracy results was higher than the Like School Group (LSG) and state averages; and
- As indicated in the graph below, 70.8% of students were ranked in the top three skill bands for numeracy compared with 52.6% for state.
Progress in literacy

The measurement of progress in literacy 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 literacy results are consistently above state average in the top skill bands.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage of Year 3 students achieving at or above minimum standard in 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>98</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>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of Year 3 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage of Year 5 students achieving at or above minimum standard in 2008</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>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant programs and initiatives

The staff of Soldiers Point Public School 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

2008 has been an industrious year with Aboriginal Education initiatives at Soldiers Point Public School. Key initiatives have focussed on working with Indigenous students to improve their academic results and on learning activities for all students within our classrooms to develop a greater understanding of Aboriginal culture and traditions.

In Term 1 our Parent School Partnership Initiative funding enabled the employment of an ‘In-class Literacy Mentor’ for our Indigenous students. This support was aimed at improving literacy outcomes and the results have been very successful.

The school community was also involved in acknowledging ‘Sorry Day’ with some students having the opportunity to view a live segment of the Prime Minister’s historic speech.

In Term 3, as part of NAIDOC celebrations, Lewis Parter, from Murri Kulcha Education, performed at the school. The presentation included: singing based on culture, environment and reconciliation, didgeridoo - history - making - playing and Aboriginal dances.

Students thoroughly enjoyed the performance and engaged in dancing and singing activities with enthusiasm. Following the performance students designed and painted their own Aboriginal boomerang on a wooden template and participate in further cultural discussions.

Indigenous students from Soldiers Point, along with Indigenous students from across the Tomaree Peninsula, were invited to attend a cultural experience at Murrook in Term 4. This day focussed on traditional lifestyles.

Multicultural education

Throughout 2008 multicultural perspectives have been integrated into classroom programs with an emphasis on developing cultural harmony and understanding. A guiding principal at Soldiers Point Public School states that, as a school community we will value a spirit of respect and tolerance for each individual.

Programs at our school are designed to develop student knowledge, skills and attitudes required for a culturally diverse society.

One highlight was the school’s involvement in Harmony Day celebrations. Two students, Jade Schutz and Erin Walsh, represented Soldiers Point Public School at a combined schools workshop at Newcastle University. In addition, during Refugee Week, our students improved their knowledge and understanding of what it means to be a refugee in Australia. This learning was enhanced by a visit from a local Sudanese refugee.

The school community of Soldiers Point is largely monocultural with only 4% of students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Respect and responsibility

Our students are taught respect and responsibility through specific school programs, our Student Welfare practices and opportunities for leadership roles. Our students also learn about respect and responsibility through the modelling by our school staff of such core values as fairness and cooperation.

The You Can Do It! program was introduced in 2008 with success. The program aims to strengthen students’ social and emotional skills and improve their approach to learning, behaviour and well-being. All students are explicitly taught about, and encouraged to apply, the five foundation behaviours of: persistence, getting along, confidence, organisation and emotional resilience.

Six parent workshops were offered to the wider community by teachers. The workshop topics included: Parenting Today, Being Emotionally Resilient, Developing Positive Relationships, Develop your Child’s Social-emotional Competence, Build Children’s Emotional Resilience and Build Children’s Positive Mindset. These workshops were very much appreciated by attendees.
Student diet

The health and wellbeing of our children is paramount. Central to our children's health is their regular diet; a concern that continues to be discussed by the wider Australian community.

In recent years the staff at Soldiers Point noticed the increase in junk food (food high in fat and sugar) being consumed by students. This has been actively discouraged via the school newsletter. Similarly, the school canteen registered as a healthy canteen ensuring access to healthy foods.

As an additional initiative, the Crunch & Sip program was introduced in 2008 to allow students to have a healthy snack during the morning session and regular access to water throughout the day. This initiative proved to be very successful and is well supported by our school community.

Benefits included reinforcing the need for healthy eating as students must have fresh fruit or vegetables for their snack, as well as breaking the usual extended time gap between breakfast and recess. The students have discovered all sorts of new foods and there have been meaningful links with the curriculum area of health.

We will continue to build on 2008’s success by promoting healthy lifestyle choices in the future. Making our school community aware of the link between diet, fitness, childhood obesity and long-term health problems is essential.

Environmental Activities

The school commenced writing the School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) in 2008. We currently have an extensive recycling program including items such as paper, toner cartridges, mobile telephones and food scraps.

Students actively participated in various community environmental programs supported by Port Stephens Council throughout the year which enhanced students’ appreciation of their local environment.

When completed, the SEMP will incorporate future goals for the school community including exploration of the Solar Schools grant.

Progress on 2008 targets

Ensuring the focus is on quality teaching and learning will continue to be the school's strategic priority.

Target 1

Sustained improved student outcomes in writing.

Our achievements include:

- Focussed professional learning opportunities for teachers on improving imagery in writing and identifying an effective narrative complication and resolution;
- Teachers regularly and collaboratively trialling, sharing and reflecting on their teaching practices for writing;
- Students’ writing samples being assessed using a rubric that provides effective feedback;
- NAPLAN writing results indicating 63.8% of Year 3 students are in the top two skill bands for writing; and
- NAPLAN writing results indicating 73.8% of Year 5 students are in the top three skill bands for writing.

Target 2

Sustained improved student outcomes in reading.

Our achievements include:

- Focussed professional learning opportunities for teachers on identifying the purpose of a text;
- Two teachers attending the Accelerated Literacy workshops. The teachers then reported back to their colleagues about strategies acquired;
- Teachers regularly and collaboratively sharing and reflecting on teaching practices for reading;
- Students’ attended a workshop presented by author John Larkin on purpose;
- NAPLAN reading results indicating 48.7% of Year 3 students are in the top two skill bands for reading; and
- NAPLAN results in reading indicating 56.1% of Year 5 students are in the top three skill bands for reading.
Target 3

Students use Information Communication Technology (ICT) effectively for communication, creativity, connection and collaboration.

Our achievements include:

- The installation of another interactive whiteboard in a classroom;
- Focussed professional learning for teachers using School-based Reporting Software Version 3 for preparing student reports;
- School's website and intranet updated regularly;
- On average, an increase in web browsing across the 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 2008 our school carried out evaluations of Communication and Creative and Practical Arts (CAPA).

Educational and management practice

Communication

Background

In order to ascertain the opinions of parents and staff about communication between the school and home, two volunteer parents managed a focus group activity for parents and teachers.

A survey was also distributed to parents unable to attend the focus group session. The survey requested parents respond to four criteria:

- Areas of communication that are going well;
- Areas of communication needing improvement;
- Ideas for improving communication; and
- Questions.

Findings and conclusions

Parents that attended and contributed to the focus group were very positive about the current communication with the school. Parents found the newsletter invaluable. It was one of the most popular methods for communication, along with emails, the website and face-to-face conferencing.

There was a feeling that parents did not know when it was appropriate to approach a teacher for a short chat (10 minutes) as they were very aware of taking up their time.

Future directions

Each teacher will inform parents of the appropriate procedure to arrange a meeting.

School staff will update the website more frequently. School staff will also update the School Information Booklet for families without access to the internet.

Curriculum

Creative and Practical Arts

Background

Carrying out a review of the school’s Creative and Practical Arts (CAPA) program was intended to ascertain what areas of the program were working well and areas we might improve.

A survey was distributed to the wider community requesting a response to the following questions:

- What areas of CAPA are working well?
- What areas of CAPA need development?
- Do you have any suggestions or ideas that may assist with the development of CAPA?
- Do you feel that CAPA is taught successfully within the classroom?

Findings and conclusions

The CAPA program has expanded significantly in recent years. The school now boasts a concert band, rock band, infants and primary choir, junior and senior dance groups. The school also purchased a kiln for firing pottery in 2006.

Ensuring the sustainability of these programs is proving difficult due to staff changes, however, school staff are committed to the success of CAPA being taught across the school.

Stage-based CAPA groups have proven to be very successful and ensure all students have opportunities to experience the strands of music, dance, art and drama.

Unfortunately, a low number of surveys were returned from the wider school community. One theme gleaned from the surveys returned was that parents had limited knowledge of the various CAPA programs operating at the school.

Future directions

The school will actively promote student achievements in CAPA via the school newsletter and the student newspaper, which is published each term.

The school will continue to operate all programs in 2009 with the possibility of employing external teachers for specialist areas.
Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

Parent opinion on school satisfaction was gathered from a survey distributed in Term 4, 2008. All families from Kindergarten through to Year 5 received the survey with 35% 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 overwhelmingly 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:

- 91% of families agreed or strongly agreed that the school was meeting the individual learning needs of their child;
- 94% of families stated that the school had a positive reputation in the community;
- 96% of families agreed or strongly agreed that the school had a positive and happy atmosphere;
- 94% of families agreed or strongly agreed that teachers at the school provide a nurturing learning environment.

Some additional comments included:

- Thanks for all your hard work. We’re happy to be part of SPPS;
- I am more than happy with our friendly community school; and
- My kids are reading and writing, and have skills beyond what I expected. They are happy and love going to school.

Other constructive feedback raised concern about the presentation of some staff members and students. Additionally, several families commented on the library being housed in a demountable as a huge disadvantage.

Professional learning

All teachers have participated in regular professional learning at staff meetings and stage team meetings. There have also been the three annual Staff Development Days. As part of their professional learning for 2008, teachers and support staff have attended workshops, network meetings and external conferences within and outside of school hours. The whole staff participated in CPR and anaphylaxis training. During the year approximately $13 000.00 was spent on professional learning.

All teaching staff received training in writing, reading, technology and student wellbeing. Extensive training was also undertaken to support the implementation of the You Can Do It! program and the School-based Reporting System, SBSR3.

The professionalism of our staff and their desire to continually develop their teaching skills impacts positively on the quality of our teaching and learning programs.
School development 2009 – 2011

The purpose of the 2009-2011 School Development Plan is to give clear direction to all teaching and learning programs over the three-year period. The plan was developed in collaboration with all teaching staff and our School Improvement and Finance Committee.

Targets for 2009

The goals for 2009 reflect the direction of the school, as represented in the School Development Plan 2009-2011, and evaluations carried out in 2008.

Target 1

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

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Providing explicit and systematic teaching of text types across all stages, including techniques to assist students to enrich their ideas and vocabulary for writing;
- Monitoring consistency and continuity of the school’s programming of writing;
- Collaboratively developing and assessing student work samples;
- Providing professional learning for teachers to improve students’ skills and performance across the school.

Our success will be measured by:

- Teachers regularly and collaboratively trialling, sharing and reflecting on their teaching practices for reading;
- Students demonstrating a clear understanding of what they are to do to successfully write different text types, particularly narrative;
- Improved results in class writing assessments and National Testing Writing results.

Target 2

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

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Providing explicit and systematic teaching of reading across all stages (incorporating aspects of Accelerated Literacy);
- Monitoring consistency and continuity of the school’s programming of reading;
- Collaboratively developing and assessing student work samples;
- Providing professional learning for teachers to improve students’ skills and performance across the school.

Our success will be measured by:

- Teachers regularly and collaboratively trialling, sharing and reflecting on their teaching practices for reading;
- Improved results in class reading assessments and National Testing Reading results.

Target 3

*Delivery of an effective transition from pre-school to Kindergarten*

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Providing regular opportunities for pre-school students to familiarise themselves with the primary school environment;
- Providing explicit and systematic teaching of text types across all stages, including techniques to assist students to enrich their ideas and vocabulary for writing;
- Monitoring consistency and continuity of the school’s programming of writing;
- Collaboratively developing and assessing student work samples;
- Providing professional learning for teachers to improve students’ skills and performance across the school.

Our success will be measured by:

- Teachers regularly and collaboratively trialling, sharing and reflecting on their teaching practices for reading;
- Students demonstrating a clear understanding of what they are to do to successfully write different text types, particularly narrative;
- Improved results in class writing assessments and National Testing Writing results.

Delivery of an effective transition from pre-school to Kindergarten

Our success will be measured by:

- Level of parental satisfaction of the school’s transition program from pre-school to Kindergarten.
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:

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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: