School context

Merimbula Public School comprises of 404 students. Our students are taught in a mainstream setting. We have gifted and talented students, students with learning difficulties as well as a small percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. A small percentage of students are from other cultural backgrounds. Some of these students come from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Merimbula Public School employed 30 staff members in 2013. Staff employed included: Executive, Teachers, School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs), Administration Staff, a School Counsellor, Canteen Supervisor and a General Assistant.

Principal’s message

Merimbula Public School continues to be an innovative school of opportunity, with excellent facilities, dedicated staff, quality teaching and learning programs and an extensive range of exemplary learning support programs and extra-curricular opportunities.

As an Empowering Local School National Partnership (ELSNP) participant, our school began implementing Learning Management and Business Reform (LMBR) operational software and introduced other features of Local School Local Decisions (LSLD) reform.

This year we opened a Uniform Shop on our site, owned and managed by Daylight Clothing. A percentage of all profits will support our school.

In 2013 three SLSOs were recognised for their efforts, being awarded for Excellence in Educational Support by a DEC Employee at the Illawarra South East Region’s (ISER) Annual Award Ceremony. They included Mrs Kay Purcell, Mrs Angela Skitt and Mrs Helen Taylor. Assistant Principal, Mrs Lisa Freedman, also received an award for Excellent Contribution Beyond the Classroom by a Teacher.

Student, Charlotte Smith-Bull, was recognised for her achievements and outstanding attendance in 2013. She was awarded for such at the ISER Aboriginal Awards Ceremony. Parent and P&C Secretary, Mrs Joanne Miller, also received recognition in 2013 by being awarded Public School Parent of the Year.

In 2013, our school sought to establish a Support Class for students with special needs. We were successful in our application and the class will be in operation on the first day of 2014. With additional student support introduced, the school established two permanent SLSO positions and gained an additional teacher of Special Education.

Our school took part in a trial for the National Data Collection for School Students with Disability in 2013. Once again our school was recognised for having exemplary knowledge, understanding and support initiatives whilst taking part in this trial and was asked to be filmed as a case study for best practice to support other schools soon to take part in the collection. Our case study now appears on the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood national web site. Our school also took part in the Personalised Learning and Support Signposting Tool trial.

The Targeting Early Numeracy (TEN) program continued to be implemented across K-2 in 2013. In addition, teachers in Years 3 to 6 were trained to implement the program. Whole school implementation of synthetic phonics literacy programs continued to take place.

Staff continued to work in close partnership with students, parents, caregivers and the school community in 2013. Together we revisited our school vision and agreed “To provide an environment where achieving one’s best is inevitable”. We also reviewed our purpose “To educate and empower our children to be learners who learn leadership skills for life, by being an all-inclusive school that strives to be the community’s first choice”. Through strong partnerships we worked with the Chamber of Commerce to offer the first annual Family Fest during the July break.

Our staff continue to work with colleagues across the Sapphire Coast Learning Community (SCLC) to collaboratively develop education and transition programs and offer academic and extra-curricular opportunities for students.

I am extremely proud of our students, staff, family and community and the ongoing commitment all show to our school.

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.

Michelle Hulme - Principal
P & C message

Merimbula Public School has had another great year in 2013. This year the P&C has contributed to the school in many ways. We have established Philosophical Ethics Classes as an option for interested families. We helped the school find a new uniform supplier. We donated individual stationary sets for classrooms and reinstated the Scholastic Book Club fundraising program. We also supported the school with the change in break times during the school day.

Our usual yearly fundraising activities took place in 2013, such as the Mother’s Day and Father’s Day stalls, Easter and Christmas raffles and the Woolworths Earn and Learn Scheme. We also had an Election Day BBQ and a movie night. None of these activities would be possible without the efforts of our many volunteers, so a big thank you to all those involved.

Our fundraising activities allowed us to donate $5000 for learning support (such as iPads for classrooms etc), 2 awards for presentation night and books for our graduating Kindergarten children.

We are also proud to announce the winner of the 2013 Public School Parent of the Year recipient Mrs Jo Miller, our P&C Secretary. Jo has been a wonderful source of fresh ideas, has worked tirelessly to support our school and is a very deserved winner of such a prestigious award. Well done Jo.

The P&C would like to thank the school for once again providing a welcoming environment for parents, carers and the broader school community to contribute to the development of our wonderful school.

Mrs Tania Dwyer – P&C President

In 2013, new leadership opportunities were offered to students. These included being a Junior House Vice-Captain (Year 4 students) and being a School Mascot.

Our SRC took part in many fundraising opportunities in 2013. We held a Pink Breakfast with the teachers to raise money for the Cancer Council. We supported 5U students in holding a fun run to raise money for one of our students who is receiving treatment for leukemia. We also held our usual fundraising activities such as mufti days and school discos.

Our school is a great school and we have many great student activities in sport and the performing arts. One great activity we took part in this year was developing a DVD on Environmental Sustainability, which we showcased at Pambula Preschool. On this day we also worked with students from Pambula Public School and teachers from the Bournda Environmental Education Centre to teach the preschool about the environment.

Ewan Jones, Kirstan Fraser, Bree Holley, Madison Rixe and Harry Fergusson – SRC Leaders

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
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<td>194</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>200</td>
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</table>
Management of non-attendance

Student non-attendance continues to be reduced through improved recording, evaluation and communication procedures in the school. As well as classroom teachers talking to students and parents/caregivers regarding non-attendance, administration staff and school executive phone parents/caregivers if absences have not been justified within a week or if absences become more frequent or extended.

Information about attendance is shared at Parent/Caregiver Information Evenings and the Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) speaks at our Kindergarten Orientation Information Session for parents/caregivers.

Teacher support, innovative program implementation, improved learning support opportunities and programs, HSLO support, School Counsellor assistance and Health and Wellbeing and Engagement Committee collaboration have also supported the management and reduction of non-attendance throughout 2013.

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

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<th>Position</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom Teacher(s)</td>
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<td>School Counsellor</td>
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<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
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The Australian Education Regulation, 2013 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce.

No 2013 staff members are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The school looks forward to welcoming an Aboriginal staff member in 2014,

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**Student attendance profile**

There was an increase in student attendance in 2013. Our 2013 attendance rates are the highest they have been in five years. Our Term 3 attendance rate was particularly good, at 96.26%.

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<tr>
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<td>94.0</td>
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<td>93.8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>92.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>94.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>94.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>94.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>94.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
who will be joining us as part of the Djinggi traineeship program.

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>
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<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSW Institute of Teachers Accreditation</td>
<td>26</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>30/11/2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>164450</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>233806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>297971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>86515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>9776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>19300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>53867</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>865685.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Expenditure**            |            |
| Teaching & learning        |            |
| Key learning areas         | 38681      |
| Excursions                 | 30709      |
| Extracurricular dissections| 52247      |
| Library                    | 2058       |
| Training & development     | 12764      |
| Tied funds                 | 288179     |
| Casual relief teachers     | 69928      |
| Administration & office    | 82162      |
| School-operated canteen    | 48633      |
| Utilities                  | 50480      |
| Maintenance                | 12120      |
| Trust accounts             | 25883      |
| Capital programs           | 0.00       |
| **Total expenditure**      | 713844.00  |
| **Balance carried forward**| 151841.00  |

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
Our dedicated, skilled and supportive staff and community members continue to enable a range of quality teaching, learning and extra-curricular programs to be facilitated at our school.

High expectations of staff and volunteer expertise enabled high achievement in the arts, sport, academic ventures and a range of other areas.

Academic achievements

NAPLAN
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 these assessments.

Year 3: from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest for Year 3)
Year 5: from Band 3 (lowest) to Band 8 (highest for Year 5)
Year 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)
Year 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

The My School website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing (NAPLAN).

Click on the link http://www.myschool.edu.au and enter the school name in the Find a school and select GO to access the school data.

NAPLAN Year 3 - Literacy (including Reading, Writing, Spelling and Grammar and Punctuation)

In 2013 our Year 3 reading results showed improvement for high achieving students, as measured by NAPLAN data. 20% of Year 3 students achieved Band 6 in reading, an improvement on our 2009-2013 average of 13.5%.

The information provided in the Financial Summary is current at the date shown. This is the latest financial information available for 2013, prior to the change-over in financial systems for our school.
Our Year 3 writing results were also an improvement on years past, demonstrating greater achievement in Band 6. In 2013, 16.7% of students achieved Band 6 results. This was an increase from the 2011-2013 average of 12.4% and a higher result than Similar School Groups who had 15.3% of students in Band 6 for writing. Similarly, the DEC State Average for students achieving Band 6 in writing was 15.3%, as measured by NAPLAN.

Year 3 Grammar and Punctuation results for students also demonstrated movement from the middle to the top bands, as compared with previous yearly averages. 15% of Year 3 students achieved results in the highest band, Band 6, compared to 11.2% on average between 2009 and 2013. High achievement was also maintained in Band 5 with 18.3% of students achieving Band 5, compared with an 18.6% average from 2009-2013.

100% of our Year 3 students achieved at or above minimum standard in writing and not one student achieved Band 1 in this area.
NAPLAN Year 3 - Numeracy

Student achievement in the highest band was not as high as in past years. Implementation of a new syllabus and new class structures may have impacted on results however improved differentiation and the purchasing of new teaching resources should enable future improvements in this area. In addition, due to the success of the TEN program K-2, teachers of 3-6 classes have also been trained to implement it in the new year.

![Percentage in bands: Year 3 Numeracy](image)

NAPLAN Year 5 - Literacy (including Reading, Writing, Spelling and Grammar and Punctuation)

Reading results for students have improved as measured by NAPLAN growth for Year 5 students compared with what their results were in Year 3 (see Average progress achievements) as well as for students receiving learning support. Only 5.5% of students achieved Band 1 in reading during 2013, compared with 9% of students between 2009-2013.

In 2013, students moved from the middle to the top bands in writing showing improvement as compared with previous NAPLAN results. 5.4% of Year 5 students achieved Band 8 in writing in 2013, whereas only 3.1% of students achieved Band 8 on average between 2011 and 2013. As well as being a good achievement for our school, the results were also higher than those achieved by SSGs on average.
Year 5 spelling results also improved in the highest band, Band 8, from 4.8% of students 2009-2013 to 5.4% of students in 2013. Results in spelling should continue to improve in the years ahead as a result of school-wide synthetic phonics programs being introduced in reading, spelling and handwriting.

Whilst grammar and punctuation results did not improve in the highest band, this will be a focus in the years ahead as consistent phonics teaching is taking place. Despite this, results in the lowest band have reduced. Only 7.1% of students achieved Band 1 in Grammar and Punctuation compared to 9.6% of students from 2009-2013.

NAPLAN Year 5 - Numeracy

Mathematics is an area of focus for 2014, with additional professional learning and TEN implementation taking place, as results did not met our usual averages. Trialing the implementation of a new Australian Curriculum may have had some effect on results however further refining scope and sequence documents should support improvement in this area.

Average progress achievements

NAPLAN reading results continue to improve at Merimbula Public School following the school-wide implementation of synthetic phonics teaching and introduction of the Fast ForWord and MultiLit suite of programs.

Average progress in reading for students between Year 3 and Year 5, since 2008, has been significantly higher than that in Similar School Groups (SSG) and DEC schools across the state, on average.

Not only have our reading results exceeded that of other schools, they continue to improve significantly. Whilst our growth was 91.5 points between 2008 and 2010, growth between 2011 and 2013 was 105.9.
Improved teaching of reading has also been accompanied by the introduction of new spelling programs and related professional learning at Merimbula Public School. As a result, improvements in spelling results may be seen for students in Year 5, as compared to the results those students achieved in Year 3. Growth in spelling was 90.8 compared with 84.4 for SSGs and 84.9 for DEC schools across the state on average.

Other school based assessments

Targeted Early Numeracy results

The Targeted Early Numeracy (TEN) intervention program fulfills a Government commitment to provide support for students experiencing substantial difficulty in learning numeracy in the early years. TEN intervention focuses on the Early Arithmetical Strategies Framework in developing number sense and mental strategies when adding and subtracting. TEN is implemented without withdrawal or an additional specialist teacher. Teachers learn to identify student needs through continuous assessment. They track and monitor student progress and plan teaching and learning experiences accordingly.

TEN recognises that a small percentage of students are at risk of numeracy failure, despite participation within a quality early numeracy program. The TEN program targets individuals and groups and provides opportunity for students to practise skills outside the numeracy lesson at least twice a day through short, sharp, targeted and frequent mathematical episodes.

Our school was targeted by the ISER to participate in the TEN program in Term 3, 2012. Eight K-2 classroom teachers were trained in the program, receiving three full days of training and fortnightly support from one of the region’s TEN facilitators. In addition, the school committed Empowering Local School National Partnerships funding for an SLSO to be trained in the program. The school completed the implementation phase at the end of Term 4, 2012.

In Terms 1 and 2 of 2013, K-2 TEN trained staff continued to implement the program and receive fortnightly facilitator support in the maintenance phase. By the beginning of Term 3 the school entered the independent phase where facilitator support was no longer offered, but data continued to be collected and analysed by the facilitator every five weeks. The school also committed Empowering Local School National Partnership funds to build the capacity of a new Stage 1 teacher, another SLSO, all Stage 2 staff and one new scheme teacher in Stage 3. They were trained in Terms 3 and 4 with all remaining staff commencing training during the Term 4 Staff Development Days.

Kindergarten Data

At the beginning of Term 1 2013, 18.6% of kindergarten students (11 of 56) were targeted as part of the TEN program (emergent counting). By the end of Term 3 this number was reduced to 3.3% (2 of 61 students).

Year 1 Data

At the beginning of Term 1 2013, 28.3% of Year 1 students (17 of 60) were targeted as part of the TEN program (perceptual counting or below). By the end of Term 3, this number was reduced to 1.6% (1 of 62 students).

Year 2 Data

At the beginning of Term 1 2013, 3.9% of Year 2 students (2 of 51) were targeted as part of the TEN program (figurative counting or below). By the end of Term 3, there were no (0%) targeted students (0 of 53) in Year 2.

The TEN program has made a significant difference to improving the learning of numeracy in the early years at Merimbula Public School.
Synthetic Phonics results

Empowering Local School National Partnerships funding was used to support the school’s Learning Assistance and Support Teacher (LAST) in training all classroom teachers and SLSOs in implementing a whole-school approach to teaching synthetic phonics. By the year’s end all teachers and support staff were trained and classes had begun implementing daily phonics activities whilst also introducing the philosophy in other areas of their literacy program.

With the pedagogy first being implemented consistently in Stage 1, the results for Year 1 and 2 students were outstanding. Results for students in other grades should improve as all staff begin to implement the program with increased support and consistency.

Due to the success of the program, the school completed staff wide consultation and consultation with the P&C to vary the school’s ‘mix of staffing’ allocation in 2014 under the new Local Schools Local Decisions framework (Merimbula Public School is one of the 229 trial schools). In 2014, the program will be further developed across the school, but particularly in Stage 1 where an additional LAST will be employed, instead of a Reading Recovery teacher, to work with a larger amount of targeted students, either 1:1 or in small groups. The school is also allocating additional Resource Allocation Model (RAM) funds to the program in 2014.

Year 1 Data

The goal for all Year 1 students was high. 95% of Year 1 students were expected to achieve MultiLit Level 3 by the year’s end. Overall 94% of Year 1 students achieved the Level 3 MultiLit benchmark. 100% of students from three classes met this goal.

Year 2 Data

95% of Year 2 students were expected to achieve MultiLit Level 7 by the year’s end. 94% of Year 2 students met this target. Impressively, 44% of the Year 1 students also met this target!

Year 3 Data

It was expected that, by the year’s end, 95% of all Year 3 students would complete 13 MultiLit levels. With Year 3 commencing the program later than Stage 1, this target was not met. 16% of students had met the target by November, with an additional 34% of students predicted to reach the target by the year’s end. With synthetic phonics instruction continuing in Year 4, together with the Fast ForWord intervention program, 2014 Year 4 results should be higher for these children.

Despite some Year 3 students still working towards their goal, 27% of Year 1 students and 63% of Year 2 students completed MultiLit Level 13, thanks to their ongoing daily participation in the synthetic phonics program from the beginning of the year.

Year 4 Data

The Year 4 classes were graded according to reading ability in 2013. 95% of Class A students were expected to achieve fluency to MultiLit Level 13 and MultiLit Word Attack Extension Level 4 by the end of 2013. It was hoped that 60% of Class B would achieve this goal.

In November, 67% of Class A students had achieved the target, with the remaining 33% of students expected to achieve the outcome in the remaining 6 weeks of school as they were already beyond MultiLit Word Attack Extension Level 3.1. 46% of Class B students had met the target by the beginning of November, with another 29% of students expected to meet the target by the year’s end as they were already above MultiLit Level 9.

Stage 1 results continued to prove the benefits of the synthetic phonics program, with 19% of Year 1 students and 46% of Year 2 students already meeting Year 4 targets.

Year 5 Data

Year 5 classes were also given a high target to meet. 90% of students were expected to achieve accuracy and fluency to MultiLit Level 13 and MultiLit Word Attack Extension Level 7. By November, 75% of students had achieved MultiLit Level 13 with 7% of students meeting the Word Attack Extension Level 7 target.

Stage 3 classes will implement the synthetic phonics program from the beginning of 2014 now that they have seen the benefits of the program, especially after having seen 8% or Year 1 students and 30% of Year 2 students meet the Year 5 target.

Year 6 Data

The target for Year 6 students was to have 95% of students achieve accuracy and fluency to MultiLit
Level 13 and MultiLit Word Attack Extension Level 10. 44% of Year 6 students met this goal by November. 2% of Year 1 students and 16% of Year 2 students also met this goal.

**Fast ForWord results**

Fast ForWord is a family of educational software products intended to enhance the cognitive skills of children. Similar to ‘brain training’ it opens neural pathways to allow students experiencing difficulty in their learning to improve their ability to learn. The program involves participants completing an hour of computer-based activities each day, triggering the brain to strengthen and develop parts that will allow improved learning, particularly in reading.

Fast ForWord uses a technique that stretches the sounds students hear, to slow the sounds down. This enables them to process these at a speed appropriate to their development. It then increases the speed according to each individual’s progress until they can perform with success at a natural speech sound.

In 2013, the 24 children in the Year 4 Class B completed the Fast ForWord program from March to September. In March and September, the reading rate (fluency), accuracy and comprehension ability of the students were assessed using the Neale Analysis.

**Rate Data**

One child’s reading rate/fluency improved by 16 months during the 6 month program according to the Neale Analysis. Many children had a slower reading rate, showing that they were taking more time to read passages correctly now that they could see the need to be accurate and comprehend text, as shown in the accuracy and comprehension data results.

The average rate increase for Class B was 1.6 months.

**Accuracy Data**

One child’s reading accuracy improved by 25 months and another by 23 months during the 6 month period, as measured by the Neale Analysis.

The average growth in reading accuracy for children in Class B, from March to September, was 11.3 months.

**Comprehension Data**

The Neale Analysis was also used to pre and post-test Class B to ascertain how participation in the Fast ForWord program affected the comprehension skills, and measured comprehension age, of the children. Amazingly, the comprehension age of one child improved by 44 months. Prior to the program the child recorded a comprehension age of 8 years and 4 months whilst after the program’s end the child’s comprehension age was 12 years, as measured by the Neale Analysis. 7 of the 24 students recorded a growth of more than 30 months in their comprehension age.

The average growth in comprehension age for Class B, according to the Neale Analysis, was 21.6 months following taking part in the 6 month program.

**Significant programs and initiatives**

**Empowering Local Schools National Partnership**

Merimbula Public School was fortunate enough to be selected as one of the Departments 229 Empowering Local School National Partnership (ELSNP) schools. This resulted in the Principal, School Administration Manager and school Executive Team receiving additional training for new initiatives being introduced by the Department, such as Learning Management and Business Reform (LMBR) and Local Schools Local Decisions (LSLD).

An additional $46000 in funding was received by the school to support the implementation of the ELSNP. This funding was used within the school to: provide additional leadership professional learning for the school’s Executive Team, including sending the Principal to the Local Leadership Program conference; train all staff in implementing the MultiPhonicS synthetic phonics program; train SLSOs and Stage 2 staff in implementing TEN; as well as provide additional SLSO time to support teachers across the school in implementing the new MultiPhonicS and TEN programs.

Successful participation in leadership initiatives through the ELSNP has supported the Principal in making other new local decisions such as varying
the mix of staffing, to engage a new Learning Assistance and Support Teacher, as well as begin new business/leadership opportunities in the school, such as: enabling afterschool and vacation care to run from the school site, managing a school-based canteen and opening a uniform shop on site. The additional ventures which have commenced in 2013, or are due to commence at the beginning of the 2014 school year, will raise additional funds for the school to enable the employment of additional support staff hours and will contribute to supporting learning support programs within the school.

Being an ELSNP school, the school was also invited to apply to be part of the SASS Professional Development Pilot, which it did. Merimbula Public School was one of 24 schools selected from across the state to participate in the pilot. The Principal, School Administration Manager and a Learning Support Officer attended a workshop in Sydney to be trained in GROWTH Coaching techniques. Since then, all support and teaching staff have completed thorough Professional Development Plans which has supported budgeting, professional learning allocations, in-servicing staff from other schools and effectively allocating funds from the newly introduced Resource Allocation Model (RAM).

The allocation of the RAM to Merimbula Public School has further enabled the Executive Team to have greater flexibility over funding within the school to support strategic planning and delivery of the School Plan. The School Plan format now being used is also a new plan format supporting the school’s development of new priority areas in align with High Performance Unit resources and professional learning put in place to support LSLD.

Positive Behaviour for Success

The Positive Behaviour for Success (PBS) program has been in its third year of implementation at Merimbula Public School in 2013. Following consultation and examination of relevant data, reward tokens were explicitly used and accumulated to acknowledge whole school behaviour that reflected school values in the playground. Accumulated tokens resulted in a school celebration day. Mascots were introduced to promote school values with students appointed to mascot roles.

Staff were engaged in professional development activities, led by the Student Welfare Consultant, focusing on classroom management processes consistent with the Positive Behaviour Program and a review of the program’s implementation within the school.

Aboriginal education

Ongoing staff participation in the No Gaps No Excuse cultural awareness training package once again ensured that Aboriginal education was a priority for Merimbula Public School in 2013. Aboriginal perspectives were embedded in all key learning areas and units of work. Educating all children about Aboriginal history, culture and contemporary Aboriginal Australia, through teaching and learning programs, continued.

Year 3 classes took part in an excursion to Jigami Farm Aboriginal Cultural Centre as part of their Australia You’re Standing In It unit of work. The children learnt about traditional Aboriginal foods and food preparation procedures, seed grinding, Johnny cakes, gathering tools, seafood and bush meats. They learnt about the environment, went on a bush tucker walk, canoe camp and treasure hunt. The children also learnt about traditional and modern painting techniques and storytelling. They also got to take part in dance and boomerang throwing activities.

Once again, the school’s Aboriginal students hosted our NAIDOC Week Assembly, based on the 2013 NAIDOC Week Theme “We Value The Vision: Yirrkala Bark Petitions”. Thirty students took to the stage to share stories, talk about family and educate the school about the Yirrkala Bark Petitions in 1963, and their significance, following 50 years since they were presented to parliament. During the assembly, some students were awarded with quality Aboriginal art works for winning an Aboriginal art competition. The artworks were
painted and donated by talented artist, and parent, Andrew Russell. The school was extremely grateful for Mr Russell’s involvement in the lead up to NAIDOC Week, which involved him teaching children how to apply Aboriginal art techniques.

Following the assembly, all students in the school celebrated NAIDOC Week with a barbecue and damper, prepared by Rebecca Williams.

Unfortunately, our school targets of having Aboriginal students represented in the proficient bands (Bands 5 and 6 for Year 3) in NAPLAN were not met. In Year 3, 1 student achieved Band 4 in the Reading and Grammar and Punctuation assessments, 2 students achieved Band 4 in the Writing and Spelling assessments. No children achieved Band 4 in Numeracy. There were four Aboriginal children who sat NAPLAN in Year 3. No Aboriginal children sat NAPLAN in Year 5.

A concerted effort to improve the literacy and numeracy results of Aboriginal children in 2014 will be supported by targeted Aboriginal funding and Equity funding our school will receive as part of their RAM. It has been decided, in consultation with the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) that all Aboriginal children K-6 will receive additional reading support through the MultiLit synthetic phonics reading program in 2014. Children will receive daily tuition one-to-one or one-to-two from a SLSO for 6 months. To support numeracy achievement, the TEN program will target student improvement K-6.

Multicultural education

All students at Merimbula Public School continue to participate in quality teaching and learning programs that develop knowledge, skills, values and positive attitudes about multiculturalism.

Units of work develop cultural awareness as too does the school’s continued participation in the NSW Department of Education and Communities Arts Unit’s Multicultural Perspectives Public Speaking Competition and Musica Viva programs.

In 2013 an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) Teacher was employed at Merimbula Public School for two days per week to support students whose first language is not English and who were also new arrivals to Australia. Throughout the year, two students received this support. Language proficiency for these students improved throughout the year, with the children reaching the required ESL Scales to exit the support program.

Inclusive school practices were reviewed and updated in 2013 in align with our PBS Program. Our Anti-Bullying, Anti-Racism and Discipline Policies were all updated in consultation with staff, students and the P&C. These policies, as well as the role of the Health and Wellbeing Committee and Anti-Racism Contact Officers, continue to be promoted at assemblies and through the school newsletter.

Sport

Merimbula Public School had another successful year in sport this year. The school teams were highly competitive at the Zone PSSA Carnivals for Swimming, Athletics and Cross Country, always coming in the top 3 places.

Children were selected to represent the Zone in many carnival events. Some children were even selected to represent our region at State Carnivals, such as Kiarna Woolley-Blain who went to State for Discus and Shot Put.

Other representative players were also selected for regional cricket, soccer, netball and AFL teams. Our PSSA knockout teams all represented our school with talent and demonstrated our school values on each outing. Our soccer and AFL teams both did particularly well, having to travel as far as Finley to play in later knockout rounds.
The Year 3 to 6 Elective Sports Program once again took place throughout the year, offering students the opportunity to take part in a wide range of sports such as zumba, fishing, tennis, aqua aerobics, water polo, dance, yoga and other more traditional sports.

A Karate Club was established at Merimbula Public School in 2013. This opportunity proved popular with students, resulting in numerous classes being made available.

Gala Days in AFL, rugby league, AusTag, Netball and Cricket were also taken part in by children from Stage 1 to Stage 3.

A special thank you must go out to all of the teacher coaches, community sport club representatives who helped to train teams and all of the dedicated parents who supported students by assisting at training sessions, enabling their child/ren to attend training and by travelling far and wide to enable their children to attend events.

Performing Arts

Once again a range of performing arts opportunities were offered at Merimbula Public School in 2013. Students took part in a school choir, vocal group, hip hop dance group, guitar tutorial group and recorder ensemble, all in addition to taking part in class-based teaching and learning programs.

Our vocal and dance groups performed at the Sapphire Coast Learning Community’s Performing Arts Festival whilst our talented Recorder Ensemble made their way to the Opera House to once again perform in the Festival of Instrumental Music.

Our hip hop dancers surprised local community members on a Saturday morning by taking to the streets and showing the town what a flash mob looks like at its best! They were also able to perform their flash mob routine on Sunrise, when in Sydney for the Year 6 Excursion.

The musical group Mara travelled to the school as part of the Musica Viva program organised by the Department’s Arts Unit. This performance was a great opportunity for the students to see a range of music styles. It also supported the classroom music programs taking place.

Throughout the year the Sapphire Coast Learning Community offered our students the opportunity to take part in a combined schools’ Music Camp as well as a combined schools’ Art Show. Both opportunities were participated in by many of our students.

Our school established an Art Club in 2013. Each week students attended a workshop after school on a Wednesday to extend their skills and understanding in applying a range of visual arts and photography techniques.

School planning and evaluation 2012—2014

School evaluation processes

NSW public schools conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan. Our 2013 evaluations included gathering information about:

- Homework; and
- Transition Programs.

Homework evaluation

Background

Teachers and parents/caregivers were given the opportunity to complete a survey about homework practices and expectations. The
survey was advertised in the school newsletter and available via a survey monkey or by obtaining a written copy from the office. Responses were low from both staff and parents/caregivers.

Responses were mostly multiple choice with some open answer written responses allowing respondents to justify their answers and provide explanation.

Findings

Homework procedures need to be more consistent as responses to homework practices, even within the same stage, were varied.

43.8% of respondents felt that homework was not important for a student to succeed at school and 43.8% believed it was moderately important. Only 12.5% of respondents believed that homework is very important in ensuring student success.

Not one teacher believed that students should be completing more than 20 minutes of homework per day on average.

When teachers were asked what kind of homework is important to them, their stage and their students, 87.5% responded that reading was, 6.3% responded that preparing for speaking tasks was and 6.3% responded that spelling practice was. Not one teacher believed that writing or mathematics practice at home was important.

More than 60% of teachers also shared that sporting and music activities, family responsibilities, family issues, lack of assistance and distractions inhibited students from completing homework.

Explanations regarding why homework concerned both teachers and parents included that homework can be onerous and it can create stress between a child and parent, support can be inconsistent, it does not always cater for individualised learning (leading to parents wanting harder homework whilst some parents want easier homework) and that parental expectations of homework, according to teachers, can be based on what they received as homework, not necessarily complimenting current practice.

Conclusion

A school homework policy was developed as a result of the evaluation, in consultation with school community members, in order to ensure inclusivity and fairness to all students and families. The policy reflects departmental policy and the desires of the school community. It has been developed as a result of reflection on previous policies and practices and feedback provided to us through the survey.

The NSW Department of Education and Communities states that ‘there is no clear research finding as to whether homework raises student achievement’. For more information about homework and the latest homework research findings, parents and caregivers can check out the Homework Policy research documents at http://tinyurl.com/det-homework-policy.

Merimbula Public School’s Homework Policy has been written to inform all school community members that homework tasks are provided to support individual students in consolidating their learning where needed, however whilst participation is encouraged it is not compulsory.

The aim of the Homework Policy is to:

- clearly communicate to our school community our homework expectations;
- recognise the rights of children to enjoy a balanced lifestyle; and
- provide points of reference for families to go to, if they so wish for their child to extend their learning.

In implementing the new Homework Policy, students are not expected to complete formal homework as in a set worksheet each week, however guidelines are to be provided for parents who wish to provide their children with further learning opportunities.

Transition program evaluation

Background

In late 2012 a steering committee was formed to support preschool to kindergarten transition, with representatives from local preschools and schools in our area. The support of Early Childhood Consultant Violetta Petreski was engaged.
The Steering Committee took part in a workshop with the Early Childhood Consultant. They held meetings to determine their vision.

A Pre-school to primary school workshop was held at Merimbula Public School at the end of 2012, and a guest presenter from the department spoke. Teachers shared primary school teaching practices and those from the pre-school settings did the same.

It was decided that kindergarten teachers wanted to get together and share with their early childhood colleagues as well as hold workshops for parents.

Findings

More planning meetings took place early in 2013. The Steering Committee shared with schools across the Sapphire Coast Learning Community (SCLC) that they wanted to improve communication between pre-schools and primary schools in regards to the transition process, especially considering the amount of information pre-school teachers have on enrolling children.

SCLC schools were happy with the findings and were willing to take the idea on board, supporting it with their own school funding.

Conclusion

In 2013, three successful parent workshops were held. Regular Kindy Sharing Circles now take place after school once a term.

School planning 2012—2014: progress in 2013

School priority 1

Health and Wellbeing

Outcomes from 2012–2014

1.1 Improved understanding of the school values.
1.2 Behaviour expectations are taught.
1.3 Ongoing reward system is evident.
1.4 A system for responding to behaviour errors is in place.
1.5 Improved monitoring, communication and management of behaviour data.
1.6 Work, Health, Safety (WHS) practices are adhered to.

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:

1.1 Staff and students demonstrated a clear understanding of the school values as recognised in PBS SET Data.
1.2 Behaviour expectations were taught as part of the school-wide Quality Start Program at the beginning of the year, through Personal Development lessons and at fortnightly school assemblies.
1.3 An ongoing reward system is evident, whole school rewards were introduced and achieved and the LMBR system enabled improved record keeping of positive rewards.
1.4 and

1.5 The school’s system used to correct behaviour errors was further improved, better communicated and recorded through the newly introduced welfare features of LMBR and new notification slips were developed to support casuals, staff consistency and the new LMBR recording features.
1.6 School WHS practices were further developed using newly introduced Department resources.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014

- Ongoing implementation of new LMBR features together with providing quality professional learning to support staff in engaging with such.
• Continuation of the Positive Behaviour for Success Program.
• Accessing new WHS resources and updating school policy and procedures to support new/best practice.

School priority 2
Engagement

Outcomes from 2012–2014

2.1 All staff will have a Professional Learning Plan.

2.2 The LAST will team teach with teachers to support implementation of a whole-school synthetic phonics program.

2.3 Teachers will develop class, school and learning community programs that are differentiated.

2.4 Staff participate in professional learning to enhance leadership capacity.

2.5 School Plan targets and the school vision drive decision making.

2.6 Attendance rates to 94% in 2013 (and 95% in 2014) however improvements were made and results were close, with the overall average attendance rate for 2013 being 93.8%, an improvement from 93.1% in 2012.

2.7 Technology integration meets the needs of all learners. Additional iPads and computers were purchased to support differentiation in each classroom and all classes now have interactive whiteboards.

2.8 Targeted learning support programs were further developed across the school. More students were receiving access to these programs also.

2.9 Improvements in Aboriginal Education delivery and outcome achievement for all Aboriginal students was worked on however greater improvement in this area is needed.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

• Ongoing professional learning on using continuums and differentiation, particularly when integrating technology and 21st Century learning skills.

• Further coaching of teachers, and training of Executive Team in, using GROWTH Coaching techniques.

• Focus on improving attendance through better communication with parents and caregivers, supported by new roll keeping software introduced as part of LMBR.

• Improved learning outcomes for Aboriginal students through targeted reading and mathematics support program options and continuum tracking.

School priority 3
Curriculum and Assessment

Outcomes from 2012–2014

3.1 Strengthened literacy and numeracy outcomes and scope and sequences across the school.
3.2 Professional learning leads to greater staff awareness of how to implement targeted literacy and numeracy programs.

3.3 Improved assessment and reporting practices are evident across the school.

3.4 Australian Curriculum in English and Mathematics are being implemented.

3.5 Whole-school synthetic phonics reading program is implemented.

**Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:**

3.1 Literacy and numeracy outcomes are refined, literacy outcomes improved and scope and sequences have been further developed.

3.2 Professional learning resulted in staff awareness on implementing targeted literacy and numeracy programs.

3.3 Improved assessment and reporting practices are evident across the school.

3.4 The Australian Curriculum in English and Mathematics are being implemented.

3.5 A whole-school synthetic phonics reading program was implemented by the year’s end by all teachers.

**Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:**

- Further support developing quality teaching and learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy by providing quality professional learning and Stage Planning Days.

- Refinement of whole school scope and sequences in align with the new Australian Curriculum, and related professional learning.

- Further development of the whole-school synthetic phonics program to include phonics being embedded more effectively in spelling and handwriting lessons.

**Professional learning**

Professional learning opportunities were offered on a whole-school and individual basis, based on needs evident in professional development plans.

Whole-school professional learning took place in: teaching synthetic-phonics, WHS training, child protection, CPR, Emergency Care, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training, Australian Curriculum implementation in English and Mathematics, wellbeing, PBS, disability data collection and PLAAST, disability standards and No Gaps No Excuse cultural awareness training.

Individual/small group professional learning and staff development days were held on: advanced Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training, TEN, leadership, coaching, LMBR implementation, welfare and technology implementation. A range of other professional learning opportunities were offered focusing on Department initiatives, change and curriculum as part of the SCLC combined school staff development day conference, attended by all staff.

**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.

**Program evaluations**

**Learning and teaching evaluation**

**Background**

Merimbula Public School offers a number of excellent whole school programs, teaching units and extra-curricular opportunities to extend and engage children in their learning so that they can be the best that they can be. Teachers, parents/caregivers and students participated in a School Map Analysis to evaluate learning and teaching across the range of 2013 programs and initiatives offered. This evaluation was a pen and paper survey sent home to every 5th family (19 responded). It was also completed by every primary-aged student (257 in Years 3 to 6 responded) and all teaching and classroom support staff (18 responded). The survey was developed by the DEC High Performance Unit, previously known as the Educational Measurement and School Accountability Directorate.

A survey on learning and teaching was completed to support teachers and the school executive team in improving learning and teaching in align with the new Australian Curriculum that is currently being implemented and evaluating the recent implementation of the Australian Curriculum for Mathematics and new resources such as iPads.
Findings

Learning Engagement

100% of staff believed that learning opportunities are provided within a *stimulating environment* either usually or almost always. 95% of parents believed this to be the case, with 5% believing environments were stimulating only sometimes. 78% of students believed that learning opportunities are provided within a stimulating environment either usually or almost always, 18% believed that such was the case sometimes and 4% believed such to rarely be the case.

100% of staff believed that a wide use of *appropriate resources* address the needs of all students almost always or usually, 98% of parents believed such to be the case and 96% of students did.

88% of staff believed that *home, school, community relationships* enhance teaching and learning. 36% of parents believed such to be the case and 34% of students did. 12% of staff, 32% of parents and 40% of students believed that home school relationships enhanced learning sometimes.

*Expectations and work habits*

94% of staff, 94% of parents and 93% of students believed that *expectations of individuals* are understood and promote excellence almost always or usually.

72% of staff, 94% of parents and 88% of students believed that *students take responsibility* for their learning almost always or usually.

100% of staff, 89% of parents and 65% of students believed that *students work independently and collaboratively* in a range of learning activities almost always or usually, with only 6% of students sharing that such happens rarely.

83% of staff, 95% of parents and 75% of students believed that *students take risks* as part of their learning almost always or usually.

*Assessment and teacher planning*

11% of staff believed that students almost always *reflect on their learning* and engage in self-assessment, whilst 55% of staff believed that students usually do such. 32% of parents believed such occurs almost always and 52% believed it occurs usually. Students believed that 58% of students almost always self-reflect whilst 26% believed they usually do.

100% of staff believed that *teaching practice is supported by critical reflection and an understanding of current practice* almost always or usually. 88% of teachers believed this to be the case almost always or usually where as 80% of students did.

100% of staff, 88% of parents and 80% of students believed that *teachers are committed to ongoing professional training and development* almost always or usually.

100% of staff, 86% of parents and 67% of students believed that teachers *collaborate with colleagues and share ideas and experiences* to improve teaching practice almost always or usually.

*Conclusion*

Learning opportunities for students are engaging and resources are appropriate and address the needs of students. Home-school relationships could further support student learning through improved communication about programs and increased opportunities for parents to engage in workshops and programs.

*Teaching*

*Curriculum and programs*

100% of staff believe that students are almost always provided with a *relevant curriculum*. 82% of parents and 62% of students believed that such was the case always and 12% of parents and 30% of students believed such was usually the case.

100% of staff, 88% of parents and 82% of students believed that teaching programs are designed to respond to students’ *interests, needs and abilities* almost always or usually.

100% of staff, 73% of parents and 87% of students believed that teachers *collaborate with students* in the learning process almost always or usually.

*Classroom management and assessment*

100% of staff, 87% of parents and 88% of students believed that *classroom management strategies* maximise student learning almost always or usually.
100% of staff, 94% of parents and 90% of students believed that continuous assessment takes place to drive programming almost always or usually.

92% of staff, 94% of parents and 82% of students believed that assessment processes are formative and summative almost always or usually.

100% of staff, 100% of parents and 86% of students believe that assessment practices are understood by parents/caregivers and students and are aligned with school policy almost always or usually.

100% of staff, 94% of parents and 90% of students believe reporting communicates information about student achievement and development almost always or usually.

92% of staff, 88% of parents and 82% of students believed that assessment and tracking is used to evaluate and refine teaching programs almost always or usually.

Conclusion

Whilst the curriculum provided is relevant, interesting and delivered at the appropriate level for students, teachers could communicate the relevance of teaching activities more often to both students and parents.

Classroom management strategies at Merimbula Public School maximise student learning and continuous assessment takes place to support programming. Formative and summative assessments are understood but could either take place more often or be better communicated to parents and students. Assessment practices could also be used more effectively, at times, to refine programs.

About this report

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

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Jennifer Smith – School Administration Manager
Jayne Wilson – Curriculum and Assessment Committee Coordinator

Lisa Kelloway - Curriculum and Assessment Committee Representative
Kim Peters – Engagement Committee Representative / Learning Assistance and Support Teacher
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