Our school at a glance

Students
In 2009 Banora Point High School had 666 students, including 80 in our first Year 12. There were 25 students doing Life Skills level of study in the Special Education faculty.

Staff
There were 53 teaching staff and twenty support staff. One teacher and two support staff were new to the school.

A regular and reliable team of casual and temporary teachers and support staff enabled the smooth functioning of the school throughout the year.

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

Significant programs and initiatives
2009 was the first year of the Higher School Certificate for Banora Point High School. Every Year 12 student achieved the HSC, with over 25% then going on to tertiary studies.

The Aurora Learning Community was officially launched by the Regional Director Peter Haigh in July. Banora Point High, Terranora and Centaur Public Schools worked together on joint programs and projects in literacy, numeracy, Year 6 to 7 transition, physical education and performing arts. High School facilities were used by both primary schools.

Student achievement in 2009

Naplan Results

Year 7

Year 7 average growth in literacy was below state level overall, although girls were above state, and they showed much better growth than boys.

Year 7 numeracy results showed better growth than literacy, but overall results were still below state.

The highest growth rates were shown among less able students, as was the case in 2008.

Year 9

Year 9 average growth in literacy improved on 2008 levels, and was greater than State levels.

Year 9 numeracy growth was weaker than state, and much weaker than 2008, especially for girls.

Essa Results

72% of students achieved Band 3 or better in the Science test. There were no overall Band 6 results, although some students achieved Band 6 in sections of the test.

School Certificate

Across the examined courses, 45% of results were in Bands 4, 5 or 6, a decline of 6% on 2008. There were no Band 6 results, which had a negative impact on overall results.

Higher School Certificate

11.5% of results were in the top 20% of the state.

The strongest performances were in Industrial Technology, Information Processes and Technology, and Visual Arts. Areas for greatest improvement were Chemistry, Mathematics 2 Unit, PD/H/PE and Physics.

This was the first HSC, which is always a challenge for schools, parents and students. Overall results were solid, and gave us a base from which to improve in future years.
Messages

Principal's message

We continued to build a positive culture of learning as we undertook our first Higher School Certificate year. A high standard was set for future years, and most Year 12 students achieved the goals they had set. Many have gone onto tertiary education.

The Aurora Learning Community continued to expand as we enjoyed our official launch, and shared in projects including Middle Years numeracy and physical activity, conducted joint professional learning, and built on existing programs in literacy and performing arts.

This year saw our Year 8 mathematicians win the Regional Maths Olympiad, which was great credit to both students and Maths staff under Mr Chikosh’s leadership.

I thank our dedicated staff for their commitment to our students in all areas – academic, welfare, culture, sport and citizenship. Without their commitment we would not be able to offer the great variety of programs which make the school such a busy and positive place.

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.

June Rogan, Principal

P&C message

The P&C congratulates Ms Rogan and her dedicated teaching team on the successful results from our first Year 12. The results give the teachers a very strong base from which to build a bright future.

The Aurora Learning Community between Banora, Terranora and Centaur Primary Schools is gathering momentum and is helping bridge the gap between Years 6 and 7.

The P&C is proud of the school’s public image and fully supports Ms Rogan and her team in their endeavours to improve the learning, cultural and social environments for our children.

We look forward to another successful year working with the school to ensure the best possible outcomes for all students.

David de Closey, P&C President

Student representative’s message

Our school has continued to grow, in both size and experience.

During 2009 we had our first Year 12 students, and now we have an idea of what faces us in the HSC.

Students were able to show leadership through the Student Representative Council, Peer Support, the Talented Athlete Squad, sporting teams, and the newly formed Environment Team. Days like the RRISK for Year 11 also gave us opportunities to lead outside of our own school. Thank you to all the teachers who have helped us develop our skills as leaders.

Competing in the Tweed Valley Sporting competition for the first time showed that we are a full high school like the others in the valley. We were proud of our efforts in our first year.

Students performed for the school, the community and the state in dance, music and drama. It is great to see so many talented students willing to take advantage of the opportunities for performance.

I would like to encourage the students to continue to pursue academic excellence. We would also like to see Year 12 students to improve their role as school leaders. Not just academically, but in all aspects of school life.

Larissa Gray and Lliam Milkins
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

The school continued to grow in 2009, and reached full Year 7 – 12 attendance with 666 students. The school appears to have reached a stable enrolment at this level.

81 students commenced Year 12, and 79 completed it.

103 students commenced Year 11 in 2009, and 79 (76%) of these continued to Year 12 in 2010. Most of those leaving have entered employment. We thank Mr Woods, Careers Advisor, for his work with early leavers to ensure they make appropriate choices for their future. With his assistance most have entered work or other training. Vocational courses are an important component of senior studies, and 89 students accessed TAFE in 2009.

Approximately 7% of students identified as being from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, and a small group of students were from non English speaking backgrounds.

Student mobility rates remained constant from previous years, with a relatively high number of students moving locally and interstate. The school hosted its first exchange students, from Holland and the USA, in 2009. We had one fee paying international student in Stage 6.

Student attendance profile

Student attendance continued to be an important focus. There is still a group of students for whom school attendance is not a priority, and we ask for the support of their parents to address this.

Attendance rates dropped further behind both state and region levels in 2009. This was the case for all years 7 – 12.

Management of non-attendance

There are regular reminders about attendance requirements in the weekly newsletter. Letters are issued to parents of students with unexplained absences of three days. Not all parents and carers respond to requests for information. Students with a pattern of poor attendance are referred to Home School Liaison Officers for following up. Some parents and carers are invited to meet with the school to develop plans to improve attendance. Partial truancy and chronic lateness have been identified as issues to be resolved, and we will be participating in a Regional attendance project in 2010, focusing on Year 9.

Retention to Year 12

136 students sat the School Certificate in 2007, and 79 completed the Higher School Certificate in 2009. This represents a 58% apparent retention rate, allowing for students who joined the school in senior years.

Post-school destinations

Changes to the school leaving age have meant that few students left at the end of Year 10. Their destinations include TAFE courses, other schools and employment. Six students enrolled in other schools for Year 11. This was generally a curriculum based decision. Very few students left school to start employment in 2010.

Year 11: 24 students left during Year 11. Most of these entered some form of employment.

This graph reflects the natural enrolment increase since the school was opened in 2004.
Most Year 12 students entering university were successful in gaining early entry to their chosen courses.

### Year 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post school destination</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working/travel</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training**

54 (68%) students gained vocational qualifications as part of their HSC studies. 6 have continued TAFE studies in 2010.

**Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification**

100% of Year 12 students gained the Higher School Certificate in 2009.

**Staff information**

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

One Deputy Principal position was placed on review following the departure of Robert Morgan. Doug Fewings and Kim Taylor capably relieved as Deputy Principal for a semester each. Jenny Clancy was appointed Head Teacher Technology and Applied Studies.

Staff departures included Helen Nelson, Ellie Philpott, Anna Brady, Dougal Marshall, Lisa Boyd, Zoe Wilson and Jacqui Kyle. Opportunities to relieve in executive positions were willingly undertaken by staff in four faculties.

Duane Galle was the only additional teacher to be appointed in 2009, as staff establishment has settled with the advent of Year 12. Terry Simpson transferred in to replace Dougal Marshall.

The school mourned the death of John Watson after a brave struggle with illness.

**Teacher qualifications**

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools. All staff participate in ongoing professional learning relevant to their areas of responsibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Staff establishment**

The teachers were supported by a part time teacher of Special Religious Education, employed by local churches. Three permanent and six temporary School Learning Support Officers were employed with Funding Support assistance to work with students with identified learning needs. DEEWR funds were used to employ two tutors to work with Aboriginal students in class and across the school.

The many regular casual teachers provided continuity of programs when teachers were absent.

The school administration staff consisted of the Senior Administration Manager, eight administration officers and the general assistant. Other support staff included four cleaners, two canteen operators and two uniform shop staff.
Three members of permanent staff identify as Aboriginal.

### Financial summary

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

**Date of financial summary:** 30/11/2009

**Income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>491,761.41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>271,777.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>251,870.74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>8,749.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>39,313.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
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</table>

**Total income** 1,154,401.71

**Expenditure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
<td>75,873.68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>42,210.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
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<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
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<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>18,611.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>39,512.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total expenditure** 909,335.32

**Balance carried forward** 245,066.39

Spending was limited across program budgets as the major focus continued to be the provision of resources for Stage 6.

The main contributor to increased utilities costs was electricity. Water rates declined considerably with the installation of water tanks to operate student toilets.

Teacher professional learning of $37,000 was included in Tied Funds expenditure.

Voluntary contributions increased slightly on 2008 levels. The decision was made to outsource the Uniform shop, and the successful tenderer took over in January 2010.

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

Significant achievements in each of the following areas are listed below.

Achievements

Academic

Results of national and state tests are in the next section.

- 79 students were awarded the Higher School Certificate, with 11.5% of results in the top 20% of the state.
- 6 students were included in the HSC ‘High Achievers’ list for the HSC.
- HSC Dance students Elissa Blanch, Karlee Maguire and Erin Forbes were invited to perform their HSC dance works at Callback, the exhibition of excellence in the HSC. Elissa was able to perform in February 2010.
- Students performed well in academic competitions, including the Australian Mathematics and English Competitions, Rio Tinto, and the Science and Engineering Challenge.
- The Year 8 Maths Olympiad team coached by Mr Chikosh won the Regional Final, and their prize was an interactive whiteboard.

Arts

- Another very successful Brave Arts evening showcased student achievements in creative and performing arts.
- The Annual Music Evening saw students from Years 7 – 12 perform for an enthusiastic audience.
- Elissa Blanch was again a lead dancer in the Indigenous dance segment at School Spectacular.
- Sixteen Banora Point High students and thirteen Centaur students, trained by Mrs Hay, were selected for School Spectacular.
- Banora Point High Dance Company performed at local, regional and state level.
- Year 9 Dance students performed as part of Centaur Public School’s NAIDOC Week celebrations.

- Year 12 Dance student, Karlee Maguire, choreographed Banora Public School students for the North Coast Dance Festival.
- HSC Visual Arts major works set an excellent standard for future years. Some of those works are featured throughout this report.

Sport

- We successfully defended the interschool in – line hockey competition trophy for the third time.
- In our first year in the Tweed Valley competition we entered 42 teams and won 9 events.
- The Talented Athlete Squad consolidated its program, and was again over subscribed for 2010.
- Talented Athlete Squad members acted as mentors and coaches for both high school and primary school students.
- Laura Coulter represented the region in softball.

Other

- For the first time we had an entry in the Lions Youth of the Year competition. Britney White was a credit to us.
- The Environment Team was formed and began working with the community to increase awareness of, and care for, our school and local environment.
- Year 12 students participated in Careers days at universities from Brisbane to Lismore.
- Our student welfare program was recognised with a Public Education Award.
- Students participated in the ‘Jump Rope for Heart’ program for the first time.
- The first student attended Stewart House, with positive outcomes.
- The Special Education faculty, staff and students, worked with community members to create a productive garden in the school grounds.
- We offered our first driver education program as students were old enough to get a driver’s licence.
- Our students did a great job as leaders at the annual RRISK day for Year 11 students across the Tweed area.
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

National Assessment Program (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 the assessments.

Yr 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)
Yr 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 7

Year 7 average growth in literacy was below state level overall, although girls were above state, and they showed much better growth than boys. Only 66% of students could be matched.

Year 7 numeracy results showed better growth than literacy, but overall results were still below state. Again, 67% of students could be matched.

The highest growth rates were shown among less able students, as was the case in 2008. We need to be more strategic in ensuring more able
students are growing in their skills and understandings at a faster pace.

The low rate for matched students reflects the high student mobility in our school. Students did not sit tests two years earlier so could not be matched. This has an impact on our overall data.

**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.

121 Year 7 and 128 Year 9 students sat the tests; representing 98% and 94% respectively of the enrolment in each year.

### Minimum Standard Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 7 students achieving at and above minimum standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Punctuation and grammar</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Numeracy</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 9 students achieving at and above minimum standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Punctuation and grammar</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Numeracy</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Science – ESSA Year 8**

No students achieved overall Band 6 results, although there were 7 Band 6 results in sections of the test. Indigenous students performed significantly above state level; and 72% of students achieved Band 3 or better.

The strongest areas were ‘Working scientifically’ and ‘communicating scientifically’. We still need to move students towards the higher achievement levels.

**School Certificate**

In the School Certificate the performance of students is reported in performance bands ranging from Performance Band 1 (lowest) to Performance Band 6 (highest).

112 students sat the School Certificate exams. Across the examined courses, 45% of results were in Bands 4, 5 or 6, a decline of 6% on 2008. There were no Band 6 results, which had a negative impact on overall results.

English and Science had the strongest results, and Maths and Geography the weakest. Students performed well in the Computing Skills assessment.

Results in internally assessed courses continue to be strong, particularly in the creative and performing arts.

**School Certificate relative performance comparison to Year 5 (value-adding)**

Relative performance continues to show negative growth from Year 5 results. As a school we have conducted in depth analysis of these results to determine how we can improve them.

One means being used is action research projects in each faculty, to identify areas of weakness and devise strategies for improvement.
Higher School Certificate

This was the first year of HSC testing for the school, so the graphs show no change from previous years.

11.5% of results were in the top 20% of the state.

The strongest performances were in Industrial Technology, information Processes and Technology, and Visual Arts. Areas for greatest improvement were Chemistry, Mathematics 2 Unit, PD/H/PE and Physics.

Evaluation of our processes for determining senior curriculum is under way, and we recognise the need to closely match students to appropriate courses.

All students who undertook vocational courses succeeded in gaining accreditation. There is a need for more vocational and non–academic courses in the senior school.

Due to the small numbers in some courses, not all results are shown in these graphs.

Students performed well in HSC Dance, Drama, Indonesian, Community & Family Studies, English Extension 1 & 2 and Industrial Technology.

Non examined courses which were studied to HSC level included sport, Lifestyle & Recreation, Exploring Early Childhood and Work Studies.

It is difficult to establish a pattern until there is more HSC data available. However, this graph shows the need to ensure that all students are studying courses at levels appropriate for them.

Students are supported in accessing vocational education (VET) courses both in school and at Tafe. Nearly 50% of Stage 6 students completed a VET course to Certificate 2 level as part of the HSC.
**Significant programs and initiatives**

The school continued to consolidate programs implemented in 2007 – 8. All programs aim to improve student outcomes through support and engagement.

**Aboriginal education**

Funding from DEEWR enabled the employment of two part time workers for both in class and extra – curricular activities. While these workers provided valuable support, our inability to fund full time workers is a limitation on the success of the program.

Students were supported with class work, with a focus on Stage 4. NAPLAN results in Year 7 showed indigenous students were generally performing at or above minimum standard in both literacy and numeracy. Year 9 literacy was stronger than numeracy.

Personalised learning plans were developed for some junior students, and the remainder are planned for 2010.

All Indigenous students attended ‘Deadly Days’ at Kingscliff Tafe, and reported very positive outcomes.

Uncle Jim from the Family Centre continued to run the ‘Boys’ Group’ each week for Years 7 and 8. He was instrumental in arranging the Term 4 trip to Emu Gully, where students enjoyed a range of challenging experiences and developed their sense of cultural identity.

Development of cultural awareness was the focus of a School Development Day session for staff from Banora Point and Centaur schools, when Lynette Riley presented training about kinship systems.

Student retention to Years 11 and 12 was 100%.

**Respect and responsibility**

Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) moved from consultation to implementation for 2010. The PBL team reviewed the Welfare system and improved the clarity of the merit system. They prepared resources for use in ‘Connect’ in 2010.

The Welfare team again led the provision of experiences to promote understanding and positive relationships. These included Peer Support for Year 7; ‘Expect Respect’ for Year 8; ‘Real Skills’ for Year 10; RRISK for Year 11; whole school presentations from ‘One Punch Can Kill’ and the Spinal Awareness Foundation; ‘Brainstorm’ productions focusing on bullying and peer relationships for each year group; and specific sessions on bullying, including cyber bullying, from the Police School Liaison Officer.

Students reported more instances of bullying to Executive, which enabled the resolution of issues with the support of parents and carers.

Student leadership opportunities came through SRC, sporting teams, Peer Support and other welfare programs. Students responded well to these opportunities, and always received praise from outside organisations for their willingness to participate.

**Talented Athlete Program**

This program was introduced in 2008. A rigorous selection process includes a detailed application outlining the student’s achievements in their chosen sport. Students must excel in their sport, either in school or in the community. The top twenty applicants form the Talented Athlete Squad for the calendar year.

In its first two years the Program has included an Australian champion in beach volleyball, and a world champion in motocross. Other members have represented to state and regional level in sports including softball, tennis, rugby league and athletics.

The program aims to maximise students’ opportunities to achieve their goals in their sport. A weekly program includes work with professional sports people, including the local Titans and Blaze Clubs. Nutritionists, physiotherapists and professional coaches share their expertise with the students.

Each student runs a coaching session in their sport for all members of the Squad. A distinctive uniform promotes the program, and the members develop their leadership skills as they work with younger students on Transition Days, and during school sporting carnivals.

Sponsorship from local businesses, especially Victory Ford and McDonalds, contributes significantly to the success of this program. We are very grateful for the support of these businesses.

**Multicultural education**

The school community included students from a variety of nationalities. ESL provision continued for students in Years 7 – 11, although the level of support declined as students became ineligible for this support.

The school hosted its first international and exchange students. They were from Japan, Holland and the USA.
There were no reports of racism to be dealt with by the trained Anti-Racism officer. Students are generally very accepting of each other.

**Progress on 2009 targets**

2009 targets reflected the identified academic goals of the school.

**Target 1**

*5% of HSC results in all courses are Band 6 or equivalent.*

We aimed high for our first HSC. While we did not achieve this target, our achievements include:

- 7 Band 6 results were achieved, by 6 students.
- 52 results, or 11.5% of the total, were in Bands 5 and 6.
- 7 results in Extension courses, or 70% of the total, were in the top 20%.

**Target 2**

*Match state achievement in overall NAPLAN results for literacy and numeracy.*

We aimed to improve our NAPLAN results from the previous year. We have not achieved our target, but our achievements include:

- In numeracy, Year 9 results improved in the middle bands over 2008 results; and Year 7 improved in the lower bands.
- In literacy, results only marginally improved in the middle bands for Year 9 and the lower bands for Year 7.
- Student growth data was best for less academic students in both assessments.

**Key evaluations**

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2009 our school carried out evaluations of Quality Teaching across the school, and the Human Society and its Environment (HSIE) faculty.

**Educational and management practice**

**Quality Teaching**

Research shows that the greatest influence on student learning outcomes in any classroom is the teacher and the quality of their teaching.

**Background**

In order to improve the quality of our teaching it is necessary to understand what is happening in classrooms now. Staff were surveyed using a school developed instrument; and students were surveyed using a School Map instrument. Year 12 were provided with a separate exit survey.

**Findings and conclusions**

Teachers were generally confident in their understanding of the Quality Teaching framework, and believed that it underpinned their classroom practice.

Strongest positive responses were in the area of intellectual quality. Areas for development were identified as the use of ICT in teaching, providing students with real audiences for their work, and giving students choice in both at school and homework tasks.

Students indicated they enjoy lessons where positive relationships exist with their teacher, where the learning is fun, and where the class is well managed. All students rate teacher explanations of work as important, and appreciate time being taken to ensure concepts are understood well.

Students and staff indicated the negative impact of disruptive behaviour on teaching and learning. This was particularly the case in junior years.

**Future directions**

The discipline and welfare system was revised in Term 4 to place a greater emphasis on positive behaviour for learning. Students who persistently disrupt learning, for whatever reason, will be followed up promptly and parents will be involved in resolving these situations. Where necessary additional support will be put in place to manage individual students.
A professional learning focus for 2010 is again quality teaching. Explicit instruction in what this means, and targeted professional learning for some staff, are both in the school plan.

A whole school professional learning plan has been developed and is being delivered through staff meetings, School Development Days, and off site professional learning activities. ICT is a major component of this plan.

**Curriculum**
The school evaluation cycle includes the formal evaluation of one faculty each year.

**Background**
The HSIE faculty delivers a significant portion of the mandatory junior curriculum, as well as senior courses including Modern and Ancient History, Business and Legal Studies, and Work Studies. These senior courses are popular with students and lead to a variety of careers and tertiary options.

Teachers in the faculty are experienced, and have all been at the school for some time. The evaluation was conducted by a retired Principal, who spent several days in the school observing classes, attending meetings and interviewing and surveying students and teachers.

**Findings and conclusions**

**Findings:**
- There was a difference between teacher perceptions about the delivery of quality teaching and practice in the classes observed.
- Senior students were enthusiastic and engaged in their learning while junior students often struggled to see the relevance of their learning.
- Teaching programs and resources were well organised.
- There were some issues of staff morale which affected faculty functioning.

**Future directions**
The review recommendations included professional learning in the Quality Teaching framework, increased collegiality in preparation and assessment marking, and development of strategies to engage students in their learning.

The faculty is reviewing all assessment procedures and engaged in professional learning about quality teaching in HSIE. Early feedback from students is positive. Morale in the faculty has improved considerably.

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**Other evaluations**

**Whole school curriculum options**

**Background**
The Curriculum team was considering options for providing a curriculum which meets the needs of all students 7 – 12. This was particularly in the light of the increased leaving age, and the need to provide suitable options for students of all abilities and interests.

**Findings and conclusions**
There was no clear agreed statement of school purpose among staff, although there was acknowledgment that we try to meet the needs of all students.

Teachers strongly support a variety of senior pathways for students, including a non – HSC stream and increased vocational options. There was a willingness to work with other schools to share curriculum.

There was less clarity about options for Stages 4 and 5, but there was a desire to improve our delivery of curriculum.

**Future directions**
Home rooms were introduced for Year 7 to support their transition to high school. Elective options in Stage 5 were as broad as possible for 2010.

Discussions between the local public schools commenced, with a view to sharing Stage 6 curriculum. This was supported by the DET with project funding. In school options will have to be restricted as the curriculum cannot continue to be staffed in its present form.
Special Education Program Review

The Department of Education makes provision for the formal review of programs, faculties and whole schools.

Background

The Special Education faculty is complex, and students have a range of disabilities which require particular programs and resources. There has been a pattern of staff injuries over the past three years and morale has been affected. DET polices and procedures have not always been fully implemented, and teaching and learning programs were still in development. The Head Teacher was appointed during 2008 when the faculty became large enough to warrant this position.

A program review was requested to identify areas for improvement in teaching and learning, and in the overall functioning of the faculty.

The Review was conducted by a Regional team which included a school representative. Observations, interviews and documentation reviews were conducted. Parents and students participated in the review.

The report and recommendations were formally presented to staff at the school at the conclusion of the Review.

Findings and conclusions

The major findings are summarised below.

- Communication was not always clear between staff, parents and students.
- Policies and procedures required clarification.
- Organisation of the faculty needed improvement.
- Professional learning was needed in curriculum and teaching practices.
- Roles and responsibilities needed to be defined and clarified.
- The faculty needed to be more integrated into whole school programs.

Future Directions

A three year action plan was developed in response to the review. All recommendations were included, with strategies for improvement. Progress is reported to the School Education Director each semester.

Work commenced during Semester 2, and much progress was made in all areas. Teaching and learning programs have been re-written to make them more relevant and responsive to student needs. A professional learning plan has been developed and is being implemented for all faculty members.

Faculty policies which align with the school and DET have been developed. The profile of the faculty has been raised in the school by various means.

Students in the Special Education faculty are valued members of the whole school community.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2009 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. This was done in an informal manner, except for the formal Year 12 exit survey and pertinent questions in the evaluation of quality teaching.

Improved staff morale is evident across the school, although workload is a concern with major government initiatives driving rapid change.

Parents generally report satisfaction with the school, and anecdotal evidence suggests that the reputation of the school in the community has improved over the past two years. In particular, the school has a reputation for supporting students with high learning needs.

There were 48 responses to the Year 12 Exit survey. Students were generally positive about the school, their experiences as learners, teacher support and assistance, their relationship with their teachers, and the relevance of their HSC studies to their future plans.

The Year 12 mentor scheme was not highly evaluated, and this has led to some revision of this scheme in 2010.
Professional learning

Professional learning was offered to all staff, both on and off site. During the year the Tied Grant of $37,000 was fully expended on priorities such as Information and Communication Technology, Quality Teaching, and curriculum areas. Stage 6 was a priority.

School development days were well used. Aboriginal cultural awareness was the focus in Term 2, and ICT in Stage 5 in Term 3. The additional school development days in Term 4 were used for faculty based learning across the northern networks, and for compliance training at school.

In addition, specific projects were implemented across the Aurora Learning Community in numeracy in Stages 3 and 4, physical education in Stages 3 and 4, and transition from primary to high school.

The Digital Education program which provided laptops to year 9 was supported by professional learning funds, and teachers began improving their ICT skills in areas such as the production of online learning materials.

SAS, accessed professional learning in new administration systems, and the completion of certificate courses through DET provision.

School development 2009 – 2011

The School Plan for 2009 – 2011 has the focus of a quality learning environment, with outcomes in three areas. These are improvement of student learning outcomes, student engagement and retention, and teacher and leader quality.

The Executive revised the plan and the targets for 2010.

Targets for 2010

The following targets prioritise external assessments.

Target 1

50% of students will show value added growth in NAPLAN results.

School results have shown that most students do show value added growth since last tested. Students in the higher bands show the least growth.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- STLA programs to target students with difficulties in literacy and numeracy.
- Explicit teaching of skills for NAPLAN in Years 7 and 9.
- Faculty action research projects with specific improvement indicators.

Our success will be measured by:

- NAPLAN results meeting the target.

Target 2

10% of HSC results will be in Bands 5 and 6.

In the first HSC results in Band 5 were solid, but there were few Band 6 results. We intend to improve upon this result in future years.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Regular communication with parents and carers to ensure students meet HSC obligations.
- Study skills program in Stage 6.
- Student exposure to HSC standards of excellence.

Our success will be measured by:

- HSC results meeting the target in all courses.
Target 3

Student attendance rates match regional level in 2010.

Student attendance rates have declined as the school has grown. There appears to be a lack of parental understanding of the importance of regular attendance in improving student outcomes.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Participation in a regional attendance project focusing on Year 9.
- Investigation of SMS messaging to improve communication with parents and carers.
- Identification of students at risk due to poor attendance patterns, and early intervention with HSLO and other support.
- Rigorous application of DET policy on student attendance.

Our success will be measured by:

- Improved student attendance rate to match regional levels.
- Improvement in response rate from parents and carers, including use of explanatory notes for absences.

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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