Messages

Principal’s message

I can happily report that 2010 was a most successful year – in fact, the most successful in my eight years at Woolbrook. The students can take the credit for this. They have been focused, involved, good-natured, diligent and happy. It has been a privilege and pleasure to be part of their learning.

The very substantial benefits of a single classroom arrangement have again been made abundantly apparent. The younger students receive great stimulation from the older students and they in turn have the opportunity to reflect on their learning growth by having the younger children in the same room. Leadership for the older students is an aspect that develops naturally in a small school, the benefits of which our children will take with them through life. Individual needs are easily catered for in a K-6 classroom because of the flexible groupings employed - especially in literacy and numeracy.

Once again, I would like to thank the school’s very talented and committed staff for their efforts during the year. The school is very fortunate to have such positive and capable people. The welfare of the children is always at the forefront of their minds.

Although it has been a highly successful year on all fronts, there are still aspects of the students’ work that can do with additional attention. Substantial progress was made in writing and spelling in 2010. Continued focus on these two areas next year promises to deliver desired results.

The school is very fortunate to have parents who show such a positive interest in their children’s learning and who are willing to communicate with the school when they feel the need. This makes running the school a lot easier than would otherwise be the case.

I would also like to thank the P&C who, by their generosity, have provided marvellous experiences for our children. In particular, I would like to thank the Uren and Matthews families for their financial support of the P&C.

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.

Malcolm Airs - Principal

P & C message

2010 has been another very exciting year for the children of Woolbrook Public School. They have had lots of educational experiences including two excursions that were substantially subsidised by the P&C. The excursion to Lake Keepit was wonderful as all students, including our Kindergarten child, participated enthusiastically.

We had four very capable marimba players represent the school as part of the NSW Small Schools’ Marimba Ensemble. They provided foyer entertainment for the audience at the Schools’ Spectacular – the world’s biggest variety show. Next year’s participants are already practising hard.

As we all know, raising money is not an easy task in small communities. Woolbrook School though has been lucky enough to have some very generous families who have made this task seem effortless - although we know it isn’t. Thank you to the Uren and Matthews families for their continued support through the agistment of cattle on their properties.

Farewell to our Year 6 students, Bonnie Brattan and Sophie Uren and to Charlie Uren who are moving on next year. We look forward to another successful year in 2011.

Carley McLaren – P&C President

Student representative’s message

The Student Representative Council (SRC) has had a very productive year in 2010. Early in the year the SRC decided to focus, once again, on raising funds for UNICEF. The aim this year was to help provide safe clean drinking water for villages in developing countries. We collected funds through hosting different events throughout the year.

This year we held a hippy day, Jeans for Jeans Day and a character day. The SRC also initiated the purchase of portable soccer nets for the school along with getting our worm farm up and running. Our vegetable gardens were also established and have a lovely crop of vegies coming on. Bonnie and I both wish the 2011 SRC
all the best for next year and wish Ruby Mcdonald all the best as she joins the SRC in 2011.

Sophie Uren - Student Council President

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The school enrolment remained steady at thirteen during the year with one Kindergarten enrolment in January and two Year 6 departures at the end of Term 4.

Student attendance profile

The school’s attendance rate of 93.7 for 2010, was above the mean level for the New England Region but below the state mean attendance rate. The school attendance rate represents an improvement on the previous three years.

Management of non-attendance

An attendance plan was developed in 2009 to address declining attendance rates. Strategies employed have impacted positively on student attendance.

Class sizes

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

In the 2010 class size audit conducted on Wednesday 17 March 2010, Woolbrook School had one student in Kindergarten, none in Year 1, four in Year 2, three in Year 3, one in Year 4, and two in both Years 5 and 6.

Structure of classes

Woolbrook School operates as a single class - Kindergarten to Year 6. This provides powerful teaching and learning opportunities where students can be instructed at their appropriate level in the most flexible manner.

Staff information

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

Staff establishment

Staffing entitlements did not change in 2010. The school had one full-time teaching principal, a relief from face-to-face/part-time/library teacher (one day per week), a permanent part-time school administrative manager (2.5 days per week) and a general assistant. A support teacher learning assistant was employed one day per week in Term 4. The school also had a classroom assistant (4.5 days per week) funded by the school and Departmental Second Adult In Small Schools program.

The National Education Agreement requires schools to report on Indigenous composition of their workforce. There were no indigenous members on the school staff in 2010.

Staff retention

There were no staff changes in 2010.

Teacher qualifications

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

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

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
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<td>Balance brought forward</td>
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<td>Global funds</td>
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<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
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<td>Interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>89104.35</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| **Expenditure**           |          |
| Teaching & learning       |          |
| Key learning areas        | 18292.70 |
| Excursions                | 7346.14  |
| Extracurricular dissections| 3837.22  |
| Library                   | 152.00   |
| Training & development    | 537.19   |
| Tied funds                | 12223.38 |
| Casual relief teachers    | 281.60   |
| Administration & office   | 9285.32  |
| School-operated canteen   | 0.00     |
| Utilities                 | 6584.50  |
| Maintenance               | 4706.27  |
| Trust accounts            | 1137.50  |
| Capital programs          | 0.00     |
| Total expenditure         | 64383.82 |
| Balance carried forward   | 24720.53 |

A full copy of the school’s 2010 financial statement will be tabled at the annual general meeting of the P&C Association. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2010

Woolbrook School places a strong focus on literacy and numeracy and measures its success by the progress of all students in these areas. However, other Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are also vitally important to provide students with a balanced and stimulating school experience.

Achievements

Arts

Once again, students benefited from a rich variety of activities during the year.

Senior students participated in an author workshop at Nowendoc School with author Narelle Oliver. Year 4, 5 and 6 students were also involved in two debating workshops at Nowendoc where they acquitted themselves particularly well.

Students were involved in a series of video conferences where they shared their marimba knowledge with Nowendoc School students.

Four students participated in the NSW Schools’ Spectacular as part of the NSW Small Schools’ Marimba Ensemble.

At the annual presentation night, students again displayed their confidence, versatility and talent when they entertained a receptive audience with their singing, drama and marimba playing in the school multipurpose building.

Sport

In swimming, Bonnie Brattan, Sophie Uren, Heidi Matthews and Charlie Uren qualified for the District Swimming Trials In Armidale in the small schools’ relay. They then progressed to the North West Trials where they represented their school and district. In cross country, Woolbrook School came third in the small schools’ section of the District event. Charlie Uren was particularly successful with a seventh place in his age division. He then progressed to the North West Cross Country where he ran well. In athletics, Jack
McLaren, Bonnie Brattan, Sophie Uren and Charlie Uren made it through to the North West Athletics Trials in the small schools’ relay.

Other

The school celebrated the opening of its attractive and functional library building which was built as part of the Building the Education Revolution (BER) program. Local parliamentary representatives, Mr Tony Windsor and Mr Richard Torbay, along with Mr Bill Heazlett (Mayor of Walcha), and Senator Doug Cameron were our special guests for the day.

Woolbrook students travelled to Yarrowitch to participate in a science day with the other schools from the Walcha Small Schools’ Cluster.

The SRC again operated effectively to achieve its goals for the year. The manner in which the students conducted its business was a credit to them.

Environmental matters featured prominently in 2010. Senior students were involved for the first time in recent years in Murder Under The Microscope. They applied themselves well, coming close to solving the environmental challenge at their first attempt. A school garden and worm farm were also re-established in Term 4.

Academic

The school relies mainly on in-class assessment to determine the progress of individuals across the course of the year. NAPLAN tests were completed in early Term 2, and provided feedback on the progress of the five students who were involved.

In reading, 62 per cent of all students achieved their stage appropriate level with another 31 per cent achieving significantly above their stage appropriate level. The percentage of students achieving their appropriate level in writing was the same as for reading. In spelling, 54 per cent of students achieved their stage level and another 31 per cent achieved significantly above their appropriate stage level. Reading is generally sound in the school. Continued solid progress in writing was apparent and significant spelling progress was also made, building upon the good results of 2009.

In numeracy, 54 per cent of students attained their stage appropriate level with another 39 per cent achieving significantly above their stage appropriate level. Overall progress and levels of achievement in numeracy were impressive.

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.

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

In 2010, three Year 3 students and two Year 5 students sat for the NAPLAN tests. Because of the requirement to avoid identifying individual students, it is not possible to give specific results for the school. Nor is it possible the reveal results and trends over the 2008-2010 period for the same reason.

The NAPLAN results of the five students involved gave some valuable information about aspects of their work. An analysis of NAPLAN results along with school based assessment, indicated some issues for the school as a whole.

- Emotional responses by individual students to formal testing situations varied greatly - both positively and negatively.
- The spelling of simpler words in writing improved significantly to a satisfactory level, but the spelling of words in isolation in structured tests was disappointing.
• students generally found it difficult to write narratives without brainstorming ideas beforehand as a class. This impacted on formal testing such as the NAPLAN.

• The general attainment level of students in numeracy was very pleasing. However, results in geometry and measurement were relatively less impressive.

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 cannot be reported because of the privacy protocols arising from the small number of students involved.

Significant programs and initiatives
Aboriginal education
Aboriginal education is an integral part of the Connected Outcomes Groups (COGs) units which the school uses as the basis for its teaching program. During the year all students visited Uralla on an excursion to visit the old Aboriginal reserve and the Aboriginal exhibit at McCrossin’s Mill. Senior students participated in a tour of The Rocks in Sydney which provided an Aboriginal perspective on life before and immediately after the arrival of the Fleet Fleet.

Multicultural education
Multicultural education continued to be a priority as a means of broadening students’ perspective on the nature of Australian society and the world generally. Regular classroom discussions focused on the issues arising in the news such as racism, Australian cultural diversity and religions.

The school promotes visits from people from other cultures. During 2010 the school was fortunate to have visitors representing Kiribati, Vietnam, Cambodia, Pakistan, Romania, Russia and Denmark. A successful multicultural day was held in Term 4.

Respect and responsibility
Respect and responsibility underpin all aspects of school life - the school rules, student expectations and behaviour.

In addition, students had the opportunity to talk to state, federal and local government representatives about their roles. Senator Cameron, visiting to open the new library, also spoke about the role of the Senate. The school participated in the Walcha Anzac March and also commemorated Remembrance Day at school in November. The school was fortunate to have Senator Barnaby Joyce, an ex-pupil of Woolbrook School, as a special guest on Presentation Night.

Once again, the SRC initiated a fundraising project to help establish village wells in developing countries.

Connected learning
Connected Classroom facilities were installed early in the year and were subsequently used on a regular basis for video conferencing with other schools. A highlight of the year was an interactive video conference with NASA in Houston, USA. Video conferences were also conducted with Bonshaw, Woolomin and Nowendoc Schools.

Other Programs
A highlight of the year was a K-6 excursion to the Lake Keepit Small Schools’ Camp. All students participated enthusiastically in the wide variety of activities conducted. The younger students especially enjoyed the opportunity to develop a little independence away from their normal routines.

Progress on 2010 targets
The following targets represented the priority areas in the 2010 school plan. Both formal and informal assessment strategies were used to determine progress towards the targets.

Target 1
Increase the percentage of students achieving stage appropriate outcomes in reading from 86 to 92 per cent, writing from 92 to 100 per cent and spelling from 86 to 92 per cent.

• The reading target of 92 per cent was achieved.
• The percentage of students who achieved their stage appropriate outcomes in writing and spelling remained unchanged from the previous year – 92 and 86 per cent respectively.
• While targets for writing and spelling were not achieved, classroom assessment indicated pleasing progress towards achieving the desired outcomes.

Target 2

*Increase student attendance rates for the year from 92.2 to 94 per cent.*

• While not achieving the target, student attendance rates improved from 92.2 to 93.7 per cent – a significant success.
• 2010 attendance rates were the best since 2006.
• The school’s attendance rate was below the mean rate for the state as a whole but above that for the Region.

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.

Educational and management practice

This year, English (writing) was scheduled for evaluation as the curriculum area and teaching as the management area.

The self-evaluation involved consulting with parents, students and teachers informally during the year, and formally through surveys in November. A very pleasing aspect of the surveying process was that all of the school’s families responded.

Teaching

Background

The quality of teaching is fundamental to the operation of an effective school. A modified Departmental School Map survey was used to determine perceptions of the quality of teaching in the school.

Findings and conclusions

The parental response to the teaching survey showed a high level of satisfaction. For all survey responses for all families, 31 per cent were positive of what the school was doing and another 64 per cent were strongly positive.

The most positive responses from parents related to the importance of what students learn, teacher awareness of students’ abilities, record keeping of progress and the information the school provides parents about their children’s progress.

Also positive, but relatively less positive than other aspects surveyed, were those related to teachers’ communication with students about what they are taught and why, and parents’ understanding of how student assessment is conducted.

Student responses to the teaching survey were also very positive. For all survey responses for all students, 37 per cent were positive of teaching in the school, and another 62 per cent were strongly positive. The most positive responses related to the importance of what is taught, teachers’ familiarity with student strengths and weaknesses, and the school’s use of work samples. Less positive responses related to teachers’ explanations of what was to be learnt and the reason why.

Future directions

• Maintain and develop the teaching strategies employed in the school.
• Regularly emphasise to parents, informally and at meetings, the means by which students’ work is assessed.
• Routinely explain to students the purpose of activities which they undertake.

Curriculum

Background

In recent years there has been an acknowledgement that student writing has not been as satisfactory as other areas. As a result, it has been made an important focus area in the school plan.

Findings and conclusions

The parental response to the writing survey showed a high level of satisfaction with the school in this KLA. For all survey responses for all families, 47 per cent were positive of what the
school was doing and another 50 per cent were strongly positive.

The most positive responses from parents related to the emphasis the school places on writing, the encouragement children receive from teachers, the classrooms as conducive environments for writing and the help students receive when they have difficulty. Also positive, but relatively less positive, were aspects related to students’ handwriting progress and parents’ desire to learn more about how writing is taught at school.

Student responses to the writing survey were also positive, but not as positive as the parents. For all survey responses for all students, 46 per cent were positive of what the school was doing and another 42 per cent were strongly positive. The most positive responses related to students’ handwriting progress and the teaching of all writing text types. Also positive, but relatively less so, were aspects related to spelling and punctuation progress. A significant number of students indicated teachers did not often provide them with feedback about their writing.

Future directions

- Continue to develop the school’s writing program.
- Provide students with regular feedback about their writing progress - individually whenever possible.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

Parents and students were asked to complete a modified Departmental survey in November with the aim of determining the general level of satisfaction with the school. There were twenty-one statements to which parents responded from strongly disagree to strongly agree and included columns for don’t know and neither agree nor disagree. All families and students completed surveys.

Parents indicated a high level of satisfaction with the school. Thirty-five per cent of all 185 responses to statements were positive with another 56 per cent being strongly positive. Of the 185 responses, only five different statements attracted a negative response.

Statements that received the strongest positive responses related to:

- the school being a safe learning environment;
- teachers providing help for students;
- communication with parents;
- principal’s accessibility for discussions;
- the school’s positive image in the community;
- the school’s reputation for learning;
- students’ enjoyment of learning at school; and
- students’ enjoyment of school.

Students’ satisfaction level with the school was marginally more positive than that for parents. Twenty-nine per cent of all 282 responses to statements were positive and another 58 per cent were strongly positive. Of 282 responses, only 6 different statements attracted a negative response.

Statements that received the strongest positive responses related to:

- teachers’ management of behaviour;
- school policies reflecting the beliefs of parents; and
- students getting along well with each other.

Students’ satisfaction level with the school was marginally more positive than that for parents. Twenty-nine per cent of all 282 responses to statements were positive and another 58 per cent were strongly positive. Of 282 responses, only 6 different statements attracted a negative response.

Statements that received the strongest positive responses related to:

- teachers’ management of behaviour;
- teachers’ willingness to listen to students;
- the school’s willingness to try to always do better; and
- students’ enjoyment of being with other students at school.

Statements that received positive responses, but relatively less positive then other statements related to:

- teachers making learning fun;
- students’ being encouraged to contribute to school decision making; and
- students feeling comfortable approaching teachers.
Professional learning

In 2010 the teacher professional learning expenditure was $2102. The Principal attended the Regional Principals’ Conference in Narrabri, the Small Schools’ Conference in Inverell, Connected Classroom training and a two day conference in Armidale. Other professional learning activities included School Education Group meetings, school development day programs and the updating of mandatory training such as CPR and child protection.

The school administrative manager and the classroom assistant were involved in the Small Schools’ Conference as well as a course addressing issues related to women in rural communities.

School development 2009 – 2011

As a result of issues arising from the school self-evaluation process, the targets in the school's three year plan were modified. A copy of the school plan can be obtained from the school.

Targets for 2011

Target 1

*Increase the percentage of students achieving stage appropriate outcomes in reading from 92 to 100 per cent, writing from 92 to 100 per cent and spelling from 86 to 92 per cent.*

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- providing regular opportunities for students to be involved in spontaneous writing activities without prior discussion;
- Broadening the type of spelling activities conducted to allow students to become more familiar with structured spelling tasks; and
- Emphasising to parents via formal and informal means, the way literacy is assessed in the school.

Our success will be measured by:

- school assessment results; and
- student NAPLAN results for Years 3 and 5.

Target 2

*Increase student attendance rates for the year from 93.7 per cent to a level higher than the state mean.*

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- informing parents about attendance expectation throughout the year; and
- discussing strategies with parents on how to encourage their children to get to school in the mornings where this may be an issue.

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.

Malcolm Airs - Principal
Janelle Smith – P&C Representative
Janice Cross – Staff Representative

School contact information

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School Code: 3501

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