

Birchgrove Public School Annual School Report 2014





Principals Report

The School has established the following areas of priority: the new Australian Curriculum implementation, literacy, numeracy, quality teaching, student engagement and wellbeing, community engagement, staff professional learning, developmental programs for children with special needs and positive behaviour management initiatives.

Community involvement has been vital in contributing to the success of the school over the past five years. The school and community of Birchgrove are unique in so many ways. The partnership that is well established between school, home and the wider community contributes to the harmonious and supportive environment at Birchgrove Public School. The team of hard working and committed staff including teaching and support staff, administration staff and general assistants work together to ensure that the children of Birchgrove are supported in a quality education environment.

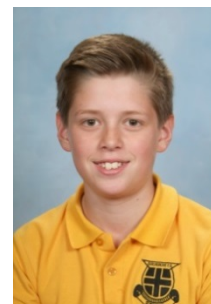
2014 has been another successful year for the school community as a whole. In reflection so much has been done to ensure that individual student needs are catered for in a progressive and happy school environment. Staff have clearly demonstrated their willingness to grow professionally through their involvement in Professional Learning and a preparedness to work with and support each other to ensure quality teaching and learning.

Collaborative planning, programming, assessment and reporting have continued to develop; with stage leaders being instrumental in guiding the process. With the introduction of the Australian Curriculum and the implementation of English in 2014, a lot of time and planning was expended to ensure success. This was a supported process

There have been many and varied achievements during the year including academic, sporting and creative highlights. Staff have worked towards achieving set targets, made adaptations where required and been progressive in their thinking to support students learning.

Tracy Gray
Principal

Student Parliament Prime Minister's Report



In year 6 at Birchgrove Public School, we were happy to be elected as the Prime Ministers of the school. This role has allowed us to learn about leadership and how to be a good role model. We have raised money for the Leukaemia Foundation, Stewart House, Exodus Foundation, and Jeans for Genes.

Parliament has run a variety of events this year including: lunch time discos, a PS4 soccer competition in the computer room, crazy hair day, Pyjama Breakfast Day and the year 5/6 sleepover to name a few.

Reuben and I believe Birchgrove Public School provides a great education and encourages students to think outside the box. All the teachers have taught us something we can take with us to high school.

On behalf of Year 6, we would like to thank everyone for teaching us and encouraging us to learn well. Birchgrove P.S. has prepared us for high school and we are all very sad to be leaving. We will miss Birchgrove!

Beatrice Colombis and
Reuben Warner Van Dijk
2014 School Prime Minister

Birchgrove P&C Association Presidents Report

2014 was a very effective and productive year for the Birchgrove Parents & Citizens Association. Throughout the year the P&C benefited from the hard work of many people and the generosity of the parent body. The P & C Executive was very grateful for all of these contributions. It was also very fortunate to have the support of sponsorships provided by local businesses, including our main sponsors: Harris Partners; Sydney Ports; healthspace; ArtSpark; Dentistry by Design; Prestige Auto Traders; and the Riverview Hotel. Special thanks go to Mark Jones and Kim Hall for their work with the local business community to secure these invaluable sponsorships. The Association's thanks go to all of the sponsors for their generosity.

A key focus of the P&C this year was on ways to enhance the playgrounds. Following a well-attended brainstorming meeting in July, funds were allocated to the construction of raised platforms in the main and pre-school playgrounds. These have proved very popular with students and teachers for play and teaching purposes. New seating in the terrace garden was constructed with P&C funds. The P&C also approved the funding and development of a master-plan for future playground enhancements. Funds were also allocated to various purposes including Maths and Literacy Teachers, a Play for Life loose playground resource and Athletics subscriptions.



Parents enjoying a catch up while children are at the Disco

This year the organization of events continued to be allocated to parents of children from specified years. The year started with the Welcome Back BBQ to welcome new parents and children to the

school and welcome back returning parents. Susie Harris and Susan Bannister did a great job organizing the night.

The Fete was an outstanding success and, as always, the weather smiled on this signature event. It was our major fund-raising event for the year and was organized brilliantly by Kim Hall, with the help of many other volunteers.



Coffee and bookstalls at the Fete

The year was capped off with the Big Night Out. This year we were treated to an authentic Country and Western experience at the Barnyard Bash BNO at Balmain Town Hall. This was a highly entertaining and well-attended event organized by Lisa Wagstaffe.

Apart from these major events, there were cake stalls, discos and sausage sizzles. Many people not named here devoted much time and effort to these and other activities. Space prevents me from thanking everyone individually, but their efforts were well-received and greatly appreciated.

Financially, the P&C ended the year in a very sound position. All of the major fund-raising events were very profitable. It was also very pleasing to see the number of parents paying their voluntary P&C fees this year, all of which greatly assists in the advancement of the children at the school.

Thanks also go to the hard-working members of the various sub-committees of the P&C for all their important work through 2014.

Finally, I would like to thank the other members of the P&C Executive – Angela Davis, Matthew Garvey, Tony Board and Anastasia Warden – and Jacki Fortune, as well as all the participants at P&C meetings for their efforts and contributions to the advancement of the School in 2014.

Chris O'Donnell
P&C President

School context statement

Birchgrove Public School is located on the Balmain Peninsula and was established in 1885. The community is diverse, vibrant and supportive. The school has a pre-school comprising four part time classes and we have 15 classes K-6. Our philosophy encompasses a whole school approach to student welfare which is proactive and restorative.

Our focus is on developing strong and supportive interpersonal relationships which encourages students to be responsible for their own behaviour and learning. At Birchgrove Public School we promote equity and excellence and lead our students into becoming confident and creative individuals, active and informed citizens, and successful learners.

Birchgrove Public School community enjoys positive relationships and high expectations demonstrated by inclusive access to learning programs and the celebration of excellence by all students. This includes meeting the needs of gifted and talented students and those with identified special / support needs.

Birchgrove Public School students demonstrate a high level of academic performance in school-based and external assessments. Data analysis indicates that our Students' have consistently performed above State, National and Statistically Similar Group NAPLAN Assessments.

Significant School Programs

Italian Language Program, Public Speaking & Debating, Student-centred welfare programs including Anti Bullying, Cyber Safety, Bounce Back and Restorative Practices, High level of integrated technology in classrooms, School-based and external sporting competitions, Creative and Performing Arts - Bands, Choir, Dance, Music Program, Extensive transition programs for Kindergarten, to Year 6, Community collaboration programs including active P&C committees and Parent Tutor Program, Year 6 Parliament, Life Skills, Leadership Forum, Gifted and Talented Programs, Peninsular Engagement Program, Tournament of Minds.

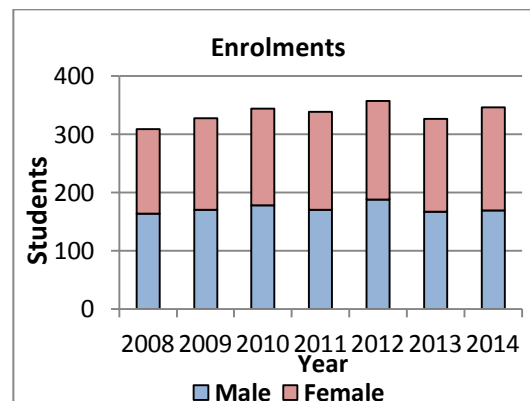
Student information

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

Student enrolment profile

Student Enrolment

Gender	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Male	164	171	178	171	188	167	169
Female	145	157	166	168	170	160	177



	Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
School	K	96.0	95.8	95.6	95.4	96.8	96.8
	1	97.0	95.6	94.6	95.9	95.0	97.7
	2	96.4	95.7	95.2	95.3	97.4	97.9
	3	96.8	95.1	95.0	95.6	96.6	97.4
	4	96.1	93.9	94.6	97.0	96.1	96.7
	5	94.0	93.9	94.8	95.5	96.0	95.6
	6	93.0	92.7	94.6	94.9	96.6	95.8
	Total	96.0	94.9	94.9	95.7	96.3	96.9
State DEC	K	94.3	94.7	94.7	94.3	95.0	95.2
	1	93.7	94.2	94.2	93.9	94.5	94.7
	2	94	94.4	94.2	94.2	94.7	94.9
	3	94.1	94.5	94.4	94.4	94.8	95.0
	4	94	94.5	94.3	94.3	94.7	94.9
	5	94	94.4	94.2	94.2	94.5	94.8
	6	93.6	94.0	93.8	93.8	94.1	94.2
	Total	92.1	94.4	94.3	94.2	94.7	94.8

Student attendance profile

Through using the electronic system SENTRAL for roll marking school attendance is effectively monitored by school executive. Partial absences are also recorded in the class roll. Students who have high percentages of non-attendance and unjustified absences are referred to the Learning Support Team. Where absenteeism is considered to be an ongoing problem and area of concern, parents are supported in developing a regular attendance plan. This may involve contact with the home school liaison officer.



Workforce information

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

Birchgrove staff bring a wide range of experiences skills and interests to their classrooms and the school as a whole.

Workforce composition

Position	Number
Principal	1
Assistant Principal(s)	3
Classroom Teacher(s)	13
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0.42
Learning and Support Teacher(s)	0.5
Teacher Librarian	0.08
Teacher of ESL	0.6
School Counsellor	0.4
Italian Teacher (RFF)	0.6
RFF Teacher	0.82
School Administrative & Support	5.072
Total	25.19

The Australian Education Regulation, 2014 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce. We currently have one Aboriginal member of staff.

Teacher qualifications

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

Qualifications	% of staff
Degree or Diploma	75
Postgraduate	25

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Professional learning is an integral part of each staff member's professional development. All our teachers are committed to enhancing their

teaching skills and attending quality learning experiences, which enhance their teaching.

Apart from allocated Staff Development Days throughout the year, staff has attended weekly school-based professional learning each term.

Professional learning has focused on:

- Mandatory Child Protection Training;
- Mandatory Emergency Care Training;
- The learner and the new curriculum;
- Teaching for the new curriculum;
- The new syllabus Mathematics K-6;
- The new syllabus Science K-6;
- Programming for quality teaching and assessing;
- A process for programming a unit of work;
- New Mathematics syllabus Adobe connect sessions;
- New History syllabus Adobe connect sessions;
- Differentiation work shops

Staff have also attended extra-curricular professional learning off site. Professional learning has included courses such as:

- Supervising and mentoring teachers seeking accreditation at Proficient
- Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training
- Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training - Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Early Career Teachers conference
- Growth Coaching Accreditation
- Supporting Reading Recovery Students in the Classroom
- Core Financial Literacy for NSW Public Schools
- Introduction to the Literacy Continuum K-10 and Plan software
- Online Training Australia - Special Education Needs. Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorders A Primary school case study:
- Using iPads to support the K-6 English Syllabus
- Establishing a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) strategy in a Primary School setting
- iPads A-Z
- Knowing your LBOTE and ESL students
- Syllabus PLUS K-6: Rich talk about texts in English K-6
- 21st CENTURY CURRICULUM DESIGN: exploring the use of tablets to support the K-6 English Syllabus

Beginning Teachers

Schools have been provided with funding under Great Teaching, Inspired Learning, to support newly appointed permanent beginning teachers adjust to their roles. At Birchgrove Public, our school has the following four conditions in place to assist one of our permanent appointments:

- Beginning teachers have reduced responsibilities or teaching loads sufficient to support the development of their skills in the first year.
- Beginning teachers are provided with ongoing feedback and support that is embedded in the collaborative practices of the school.
- Mentoring structures and collaborative practices support beginning teachers within the school or across a cluster of schools, and any teacher mentors have access to specific training and the flexibility in their teaching responsibilities to support classroom observation and provide structured feedback.
- Beginning teachers have access to professional learning that focuses on classroom and behaviour management, strategies to build student engagement, collaborative professional practices within the school and productive relationships with parents and care givers.



Science Experiment –Static Electricity

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	30/11/2014
Income	\$
Balance brought forward	296177.42
Global funds	231570.17
Tied funds	94195.69
School & community sources	449896.78
Interest	8344.25
Trust receipts	195505.47
Canteen	100851.67
Total income	1376541.45
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	51972.47
Excursions	61594.64
Extracurricular dissections	263405.23
Library	10907.72
Training & development	14229.04
Tied funds	89811.26
Casual relief teachers	99169.75
Administration & office	181489.38
School-operated canteen	107654.56
Utilities	51092.25
Maintenance	59318.45
Trust accounts	206953.88
Capital programs	3480979
Total expenditure	1232408.42
Balance carried forward	144133.03

A full copy of the school's 2014 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 2014

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)

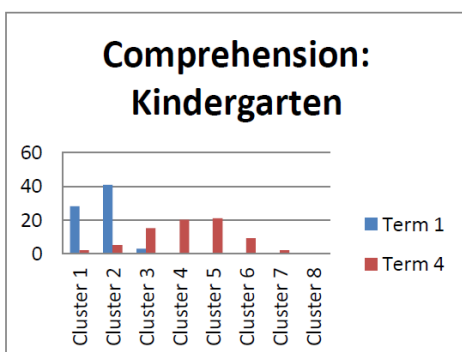
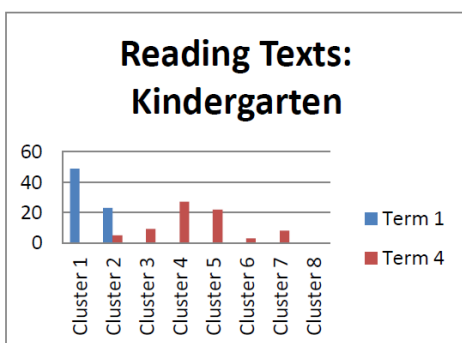
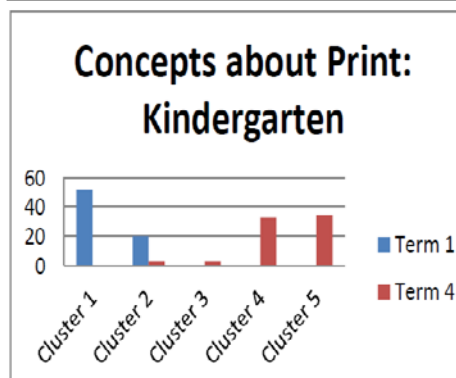
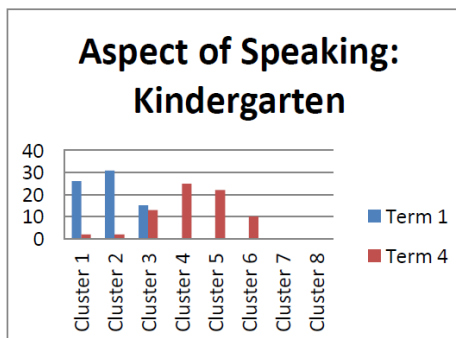
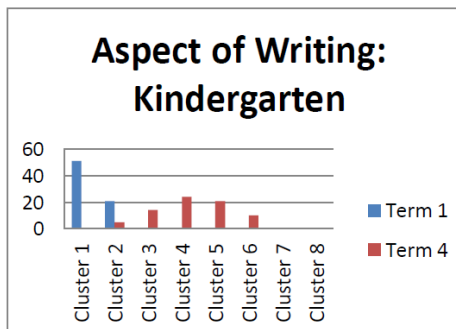
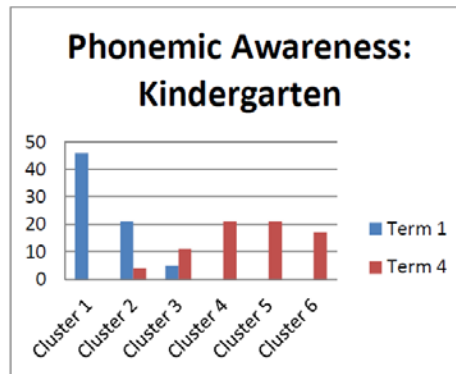
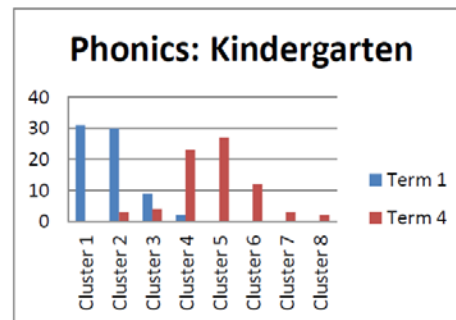
The *My School* website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing (NAPLAN).

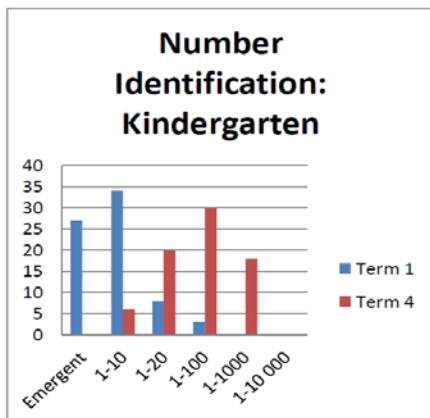
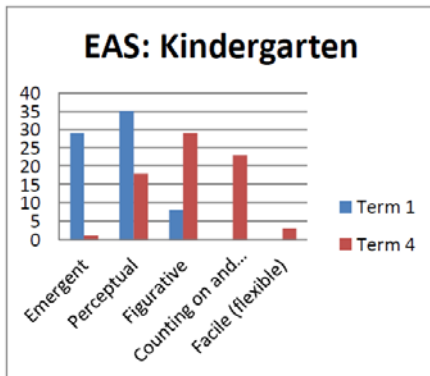
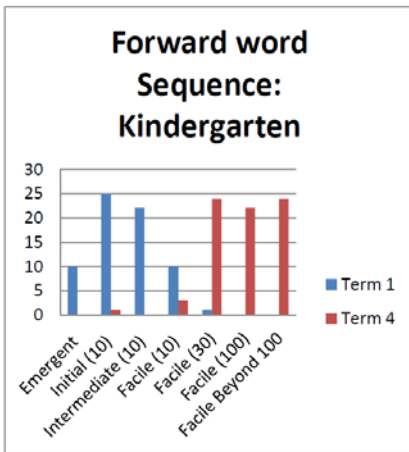
Click on the link <http://www.myschool.edu.au> and enter the school name in the *Find a school* and select *GO* to access the school data.

BEST START

On the two days before commencing school all students in Kindergarten completed the Best Start Assessment program. Students completed a variety of literacy and numeracy tasks whilst working individually with their classroom teacher. This formal assessment provided teachers with extensive information about students' knowledge, skills and experiences in literacy and numeracy prior to engaging in formal learning experiences.

Information gathered was thoroughly analysed and students were placed on the Literacy and Numeracy Continuums accordingly. Students' academic progress in these areas was then monitored and tracked throughout the year. They were moved along the continuums as their skills and abilities increased. Early Learning Plans were also created, and assisted in the planning and development of classroom teaching and learning programs. Parents received a report in term one detailing their child's skills prior to starting school and activities that they could implement at home to assist their child's learning. Progress on the children's learning from entering kindergarten is reviewed regularly and the results for 2014 are on the graphs below.





Kindergarten Literacy Online

READING RECOVERY PROGRAM

Rationale: Keeping the school fully informed of the successes and continued need for reading recovery.

Background: The Reading Recovery program has been running at Birchgrove Public School since 2003.

In 2014 the allocation for Reading Recovery was .42, with the teaching position being filled by Mr Damien Fitzgerald, teaching 4 students per day. Eight students were catered for in this year's program. This translates to a coverage of 14% of the Year 1 cohort of 57.

Outcomes: Seven students successfully discontinued from Reading Recovery in 2014. Reading levels at the initial intake ranged from 2-3 and levels 5-13 in the final intake. By the end of the year the discontinued students reading levels ranged from 18-21. One student was initially referred off the program due to processing difficulties. However, progress made within the classroom and their participation in the parent reading scheme allowed them to be counted in the December discontinuation numbers. One student from the final intake will continue on as a carry over into Term 1, 2015. In the first intake students needed the full 20 weeks of the program, due to lower reading levels where students in the final intake discontinued after 9-10 weeks.

Ongoing Monitoring: All Year 2 students scored above the Reading Recovery minimum level (level 16) in reading, BURT and South Australian spelling. Reading levels were above 19. In Year 3, all students scored at or above the reading Recovery minimum (level 20) in reading, BURT and South Australian spelling. Reading levels ranged from 20-28. It is recommended that the student who was identified as reading at an instructional level of 20 continue receiving support into Year 4.

It appears from these results that reading recovery students continue to make gains in the years following completion of the program.

Recommendations: Target students at risk through the LAST or Parent Reading Programs. Alerting class teachers of students' needs and ensuring they are catered for at their level in guided reading. Replenishing books at higher levels and culling dated and tatty books is suggested. Training all Year One teachers in the Observational Survey procedure is well worth considering. This informs class teachers of their student's progress at the end of the program as they return to the class program; facilitates a

common language with Reading Recovery teacher and class teacher.

21		D					DD	DD
20								
19			D					
18	D			DD				
17						DD		
16								
15								
14								
13								
12								
11								
10					P			
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1								
Students								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
D = Discontinued first half of year				DD = Discontinued December				
RP = Referred for Processing				P = Program Continues (following year)				

Damien Fitzgerald
Reading Recovery

Significant programs and initiatives – Policy and equity funding

ABORIGINAL BACKGROUND

In 2014 we had no known students with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Background.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

English as an Additional Language or Dialect

Students were given withdrawal and small group lessons. During these lessons the students were introduced to the English language in contextual situations. As the lessons were literacy based the students listened to stories, wrote joint literature, shared their own stories and performed short role plays.

They uses mathematical language during our basic cooking lessons, where products included jelly, bruschetta, fruit kebabs and iced biscuits. Formerly known as ESL (English as a Second Language) EAL/D was taught to a limited number of students from non-English speaking backgrounds at BPS in 2014.

Multicultural Education and Anti-Racism

Birchgrove Public School staff delivers programs that embrace and support multiculturalism through various strategies across all curriculum areas. These programs enable students to learn about and consider the benefits of living in a diverse and tolerant society. They develop students' attitudes, skills, knowledge and awareness of the fact that Australia is a multicultural country where we need to respect each others' differences and celebrate our similarities in order to accept multicultural ideals and practices.



In 2014, our school celebrated Harmony Day which emphasised cultural diversity and acceptance. Class programs incorporated multicultural perspectives, and activities reflect student identity and cultural background. In 2015, an additional staff member is being trained as Anti-Racism Contact Officer.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

In 2014 we received 1,743.36 funding this went towards payment of our SLSO, who worked with students needing extra support. The school used it's general funds flexible learning support funding to help cover the costs of our SLSO.

Other significant initiatives

Learning and Support

At Birchgrove Public School our Learning Support Team consists of: the Executive team Miss Gray, Mr Cormack, Ms Ford & Ms Weber, School Counsellor- Mr Mclymont, Learning and Support teacher- Ms Thompson, Classroom Teacher -Miss Gare and Reading Recovery Teacher- Mr Fitzgerald. Each week the team is also joined by a classroom teacher according to a roster and teachers who have made referrals for students in their classes.

The Learning Support Team (LST) meets weekly to address the needs of identified students. Referrals to the team may be made by staff and parents and are based on physical, cognitive, sensory, social and emotional needs. The team assesses each referral in consultation with the class teacher and develops plans to address the individual needs of students which include communicating with parents and in some cases, collaborating with a range of student services. We also assign a mentor from the team to class teachers with students' referrals' and help with the development of individualised learning plans as needed.

This year our school was also involved in the trial of the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data. This involved counting the number of students who are supported by any form of adjustment in the domains of: physical, emotional/ social, sensory and cognitive areas. The school had a total of 28 students who received adjustments for 10 weeks before July 28th. The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data will be compulsory in 2016.

Tracking and Profile sheets are used by staff to record student information to pass onto the following teachers to allow effective transitioning of all students into 2015.

School programs implemented, monitored and evaluated by the LST include: Structured Play Activities, Reading Recovery, Parent Tutor Program, Social Skills Programs, and Literacy/ Numeracy Groups with the Learning and Support Teacher or School Learning

Support Officer.

An updated Learning Support Team policy was written this year and an evaluation is being planned for the LST in 2015 to review current practices and to make any necessary adjustments. Our LST is a highly effective and essential component of the school's welfare program and is well respected for its professionalism and dedication to the students of our school.



Didgeribone performing @ NAIDOC Week Celebrations

Aboriginal education Birchgrove Public School acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional custodians of the land, Elders past and present and all Aboriginal people in the community. School staff and students pay respect at weekly assemblies and special events During National Reconciliation Week Years 2, 3 & 4 went to Balmain Library for their flag raising ceremony. They learnt about the history and significance of the flag in indigenous culture. They also heard about the Cadigal and Wangal people the traditional owners of the land that includes the suburb of Balmain. Indigenous perspectives are incorporated into all curriculum areas and this year during Naidoc week students P to 6 enjoyed a visiting indigenous performance from 'Didgeribone'. Aunty Faye from the Aboriginal Education and Engagement Team joined us for the afternoon performance.

PRESCHOOL

Birchgrove Public School Preschool is a two unit centre offering children 2.5 days a week with 80 students places. Term two welcomed a new Assistant Principal Jodie Weber relieving Meghan Brazier, who is the teacher in the preschool and supervisor of Early Stage One. The Preschool has three Early Childhood Teachers and two teacher's aides each week.



Fire Brigade Visit

The Preschool Program is divided into seven Quality Areas:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management.

The National Quality Standard aims to promote:

- the safety, health and wellbeing of children
- a focus on achieving outcomes for children through high-quality educational programs
- families' understanding of what distinguishes a quality service. (NSW DEC)

The Quality Improvement Plan has been a working document all year, as required by the Australian Children's education and care Quality Authority. (ACECQA). It is based on the notion of 'Continual Improvement' and addresses nineteen elements of the national quality standards (NQS)

We had so many incursions in 2014 to promote learning outcomes for the children. Fizzics, Hatch and Grow, Kids on Congas, Fire fighters, Police, Dog Safety, Indigenous Concerts, Book Parades, Easter Hat Parade, Local walks, Italian Day, various concerts and performances and parent visits with their expertise.

At Birchgrove Preschool the children are given opportunities to learn in a social environment rich in language and play experiences which are based on the children's interests. The children become independent confident learners. We also had a playground upgrade with a new deck / beautiful stage around our sandpit and tree.

In 2015 the preschool will be replacing the 2.5 day week to a 2 day/ 3 day program first semester and 3day/ 2 day second semester.

Our dedicated Preschool staff ensures a smooth transition to school program where individual needs and interests are catered for.



Jodie Weber
Assistant Principal

TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

Birchgrove Public School helped students and parents prepare for the 2014 school year by offering a comprehensive and supportive orientation and transition program. A well-attended parent information night was conducted in Term 3. School staff provided an insight of the curriculum, school programs and extracurricular opportunities offered to students. This was followed by an orientation morning where students experienced their first introduction to 'big school'. They visited the kindergarten classrooms and participated in literacy / numeracy and play based activities. In the final week they were given a Year 5 buddy to play sport based games with.

Parents were also given a tour of the school and attended information sessions while the children enjoyed the classes. parent information sessions were conducted and included presentations by school staff and a variety of guest speakers. This enabled parents to find out and ask questions about the school, the curriculum, school readiness, uniforms and healthy lunch ideas. Parents also learnt about the invaluable links the school has with the local community, the important role the P&C has in supporting the school and ways in which they can become involved in the school.

On the last morning session parents enjoyed a morning tea with the current group of kindergarten parents who happily answered all their starting school questions from a parent perspective.



MUSIC PROGRAM

"If children are not introduced to music at an early age, I believe something fundamental is actually being taken from them" Luciano Pavarotti

2014 was another successful year for our very fine Birchgrove Public School Music Program. An extracurricular program, it caters to over half the children in the school - an outstanding level of participation that most schools can only envy. We offer opportunities from kindergarten right through to year 6, encompassing bands, string ensembles, recorder ensembles, Kodaly music education and for the first time in 2014, a Rock Guitar ensemble.

The program is organised by a committed, capable and extremely nice group of parent volunteers and receives outstanding support from all BPS staff but especially from our Principal, Tracy Gray and our indefatigable Assistant Principal, Rob Cormack, who both give graciously and often of their own personal time.

Highlights from 2014 included:

- The introduction of our new Rock Guitar ensemble, with 13 wickedly cool participants under the guidance of their very own Man in Black, Mike Rix.
- Our largest Concert Band in many years – if not ever – sounded incredible. Under conductor Rod Mason they won a gold medal at the NSW Bands Festival and also first place in their category at Ryde East festival in May.
- The Senior Strings, Consort and Advanced Consort Recorders performed once more at the Sydney Opera House as part of the Festival of Instrumental Music.
- All music participants in Years 3-6 came together in October at our fifth (and largest) annual Music Camp which was held at the Baden Powell Scout Centre in Pennant Hills. The Music Camp was run jointly by the Music Committee and the school.
- Financially, the committee remains in a very strong position, which is allowing us to replenish many musical instruments in 2015 as well as providing free instrument hire and band membership to a family who would be unable to participate in the program without financial assistance. We also received funding from the P&C this year which allowed us to buy two new flutes and one new trumpet.



Concert Band

All ensembles have performed regularly this year, with other performances including the School Fete, Music Night, St John's Fete, Back to Balmain, Senior Music Soiree and the end of year Christmas concert.

Numbers are healthy for new recruits in 2015, with 21 new band recruits, 15 new string recruits and 18 new recorder recruits at the time of writing. We also have 12 children wanting to start learning the guitar and 5 wanting to start learning piano. It is important for the program that we do not become too guitar focused and a priority must be keeping the other ensembles as prominent as possible within the school.



Senior Strings performing @ Balmain Hospital

A big thank you must go to our *entire* Music Committee, an extraordinary group of parents who all help out in so many ways and keep this remarkable program running so smoothly. I would however like to say a few special thank yous:

- To Lisa Healy who did a crap job of taking a back seat role, but a fabulous job of always being there to give me advice, support and make me laugh.
- To Michelle Stellini who is indeed the "little star" that her name translates as. Michelle appeared to be on a mission to collect as many committee roles as she

could and did a terrific job of every one of them. Her work ethic is outstanding as is her desire to ensure that every family gets the most that they can from the program.

- To Audrey McGibbon for taking on the organisation of Music Camp, selflessly risking her husband's life at the wheel of a dodgy Balmain Rentals truck to save us money and thoughtfully waiting until it was all over to crack her ribs.
- To Marian Barker for making us all care about the recorder program and for breathing new life into it for 2015.
- To the always smiling Finola Daly for not just this year but many years of looking after string ensembles – we will miss you very much.
- To Graham Jepson and Paul Angus for lending us their exceptional photographic (Graham) and kid wrangling (Paul) talents to raise money for the Music Committee and solving all our “what on earth do I give the in-laws for Christmas” dilemmas along the way.

As I prepare to hand over my crown at the Music AGM meeting, I can reflect on a very good year and know that I am leaving the program in excellent hands.

Jacki Fortune
Music Co-ordinator's

CREATIVE AND PRACTICAL ARTS (CAPA)

2014 was a relatively quiet year for the CAPA committee. After the hard work put into the successful 'Art Show' last year, 2014 was an planning year in our biennial whole-school performance/show schedule. We will be back in action in 2015, producing a whole-school movie that will culminate in red carpet, premiere screening in Term 4. The theme of the movie will be 'Back to the Future'.

During the year, all children P-6 were involved in the creation of another fantastic mural for our school. The theme of this mural was 'Evolution'. Once again, we must thank our wonderful 'artist-in-residence', Kristyn Taylor, for all the hard work she put with the children to create this amazing mural.



Raw Art lesson

This year, most of the children also attended an in-school art workshop run by RAW ART. A specific art workshop was chosen by class teachers in order to expose students to a broader range of art making experiences. Qualified art teachers ran the sessions and provided an invaluable and enjoyable learning experience for the children.



1C Every cloud has a silver lining

John Nguyen
Creative & Practical Arts Committee Coordinator

PUBLIC SPEAKING

In 2014, all Birchgrove students from K-6 participated in the Sydney East Public Speaking Competition. The Public Speaking Committee attended professional learning and, following this, provided teachers with a resource to support the explicit teaching of public speaking skills and information about the assessment criteria for the competition.

Students were explicitly taught skills in planning and writing a speech as well as appropriate manner and audience engagement. A finalist was chosen from each class to deliver their speech for their stage and a Stage finalist for each stage was determined. The Public Speaking Committee provided the finalists with instruction and practice, particularly in giving an impromptu speech, to support them in representing Birchgrove Public School at the Sydney East Region Final. The Final was again held at our school, with students representing 14 schools from the region visiting.

Public Speaking Committee
Benjamin Dodds and Jo Copping

DEBATING

Students in years 5 and 6 had the opportunity in 2014 to participate in the Premier's Debating Challenge and the Inner West Friendly Debating Competition. All students were given the opportunity to try out for these debating programs.

Those that were interested and successful formed teams and prepared for both home and away debates. Though our debaters were not amongst the competitions' winners, their dedication, ability and enthusiasm were a credit to Birchgrove Public School.



2014 Premiers debating Team

Debating Committee
Benjamin Dodds and Jo Copping

SPELLING BEE

In 2014, Birchgrove Public School was involved in the NSW Premier's Spelling Bee. The competition was open to students in Stages 2 and 3. A class quiz determined who would face-off during a lunchtime challenge to find the school's representatives for the regional final.

Spelling Bee Coordinator
Benjamin Dodds

ITALIAN DAY

Grazie to all the people that made la giornata italiana a huge success. The students were encouraged to come to school dressed in any combination of the colours of the Italian flag: green (verde), white (bianco) and red (rosso).

Dennis Murphy entertained the students with a performance of "Puppets and Masks of Italy" for K-2 and "Further Adventures of Arlecchino" for 3-6.



In 2014 we were fortunate to have the pizza

making skills of one of our parent, Mr Oscar Atriano. He assisted each student in K-6 to make their own pizza to eat. Karen in the canteen had an Italian Meal Deal available for students to order for lunch.

In Italian we play games, sing dance and learn about Italian culture, as well as having Italian conversations. Year 6 are shown playing Scopa. Scopa is an Italian [card game](#), and one of the two major national card games in Italy. It is also popular in [Brazil](#), brought in by [Italian immigrants](#), mostly It is played with a standard [Italian 40-card deck](#), mostly between two players or four in two partnerships, but it can also be played by 3, 5, or 6 players.

The name is an Italian noun meaning "broom", since taking a scopa means "to sweep" all the cards from the table. Watching a game of scopa can be a highly entertaining activity, since games traditionally involve lively, colorful, and somewhat strong-worded banter in between hands. However, skill and chance are more important to the outcome of the game.

Signora Scutts
Italian Teacher



Year 6 playing Scopa

STUDENT PARLIAMENT

The Birchgrove Public School Student Parliament of 2014 has had a very successful year. Student Parliament at Birchgrove, provides leadership opportunities for Year 6 students and classroom representatives form years 2 to 6, by giving them the opportunity to organise and run a large number of social events throughout the year. From talent quests and scavenger hunts, to discos and sporting competitions, Student Parliament, this year, has made a huge contribution to the student life at Birchgrove.

However, their influence does not stop there. This year, through their fundraising activities, such as 'World Food Day', Crazy Hair Day, Pyjama Day and the 'Stage 3 School Sleepover', Student

Parliament has managed to raise over \$4000 for a charities such as World Vision, Lukemia Foundation and Exodus. Their efforts, this year, are to be congratulated as they have truly made a difference in their community, both local and global.



Crazy Hair Day



Stage 3 Sleepover

CHOIR

This year the choir has given students the opportunity to learn and perform a variety of songs at events over the year. The junior and senior groups (years K-2 and 3-6 respectively) met weekly to learn and practice songs during lunchtime. Students were given the opportunity to have some input in the song choice, making suggestions and voting on a song to learn and perform. This resulted in the students' increased engagement with the program and impressive singing performance. The events at which the choirs performed included the school fete, the music night and the Christmas concert. The choir also sang at the reopening of Woolworths Balmain and received a \$1000 cheque as a thank you that went into our Creative and Practical Arts budget. Thank you to the students for their dedication and commitment to attending practice and learning the songs.

STUDENT WELFARE

The Bounce Back! program has continued to be implemented P to 6. Students and staff use a common language to talk about wellbeing and resiliency across the school.

Peer Support

In 2014 school staff implemented the Peer Support Program, with the focus being on Resilience. Students in Year 5&6 were trained over a two day leaders in the program.

The leaders were responsible for delivering a unit of work, "Resilience" to their peers. Each group consisted of a mix of students from Kindergarten

to Year 6 and the program ran once a week over an eight week period.



The module allowed the students to develop their leadership skills, build friendships and deliver the valuable program.

Working with ESR Welfare on Sentral school system the Welfare committee has developed a computer recording program tailored to meet the needs of the school in recording and monitoring behaviour.

Our **Restorative Practice** approach to student welfare is continuing and staff spent an afternoon with Terry O'Connell from Real Justice and looked at their current practices and how they could be further improved. In 2014 we held teacher workshops as well as parent and student workshops.

GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

In Gifted and Talented education the staff has continued to develop skills to differentiate the curriculum especially in English and Mathematics, as they learn more about PLAN (Planning Literacy and Numeracy) and use it to guide their teaching and learning. The school entered two teams in the State wide Tournament of the Minds competition.

The Peninsula Engagement program, a joint initiative between the five primary schools on the Balmain peninsula and Sydney Secondary College, ran for a second year. This program targets Year 5 and exceptional Year 4 students in an annual two day event. Students participate in enrichment workshops in English, Mathematics, Science and History. This program was highly successful and will continue.

TOURNAMENT OF MINDS

In 2014 Birchgrove again entered two teams in Tournament of minds. The teams consisted of students in Years 4 -6, identified from the Gifted and Talented register. After forming teams the students chose their challenges and had 6 weeks to work on their solution. In 2014 we entered the

following challenges, 'Wearable Wretchedness' (Applied Technology) and 'The Epic Homer' (Language and Literature). Both teams represented Birchgrove Public School well at the Regional Final.



SPORT

Students in K-6 participated in a range of activities during weekly sports lessons based on the DET syllabus outcomes. This included gross motor, fundamental movement skills, fitness and swimming in years 3 – 6.

Students in Years 3-6 were coached/ trained in the sports of T'Ball, Softball, Cricket, Football, Oz Tag, Netball, AFL, Volleyball, Cross Country Running, and the Athletics skills of Discus, Shot Put, Long Jump and Sprinting as part of their weekly sport. In term 4 the children in Years 3 - 6 once again attended the Ryde Aquatic Centre to improve their swimming skills and be taught water safety.

The Year 5 & 6 students competed in Balmain PSSA Weekly Sport. The Summer sports we competed in were Softball, OZ Tag and Cricket and the Winter Sports were Netball, AFL and Football. The children competed against other local schools and were very competitive even against some of the bigger schools. We won the 'A Grade' AFL competition.

The Year 1 & 2 children were split into groups and took part in a weekly skills development program focusing on the key components of a variety of sports. They were taught to bowl, throw, hit, kick, pass, catch and skip using the techniques associated with various sports. By improving their skills they are better prepared to play the different sports in later years.

Kindergarten worked on their gross motor and fundamental movement skills in their weekly sports lessons.

Birchgrove Public School ran successful swimming, cross country and athletics carnivals again in 2014 and Fort Street Public School joined us for the Swimming Carnival. Our best swimmers, runners and athletes went on to the

Balmain PSSA Carnivals and more children made it to the Sydney East Carnivals in all these events. We had children make it to the State Carnival for Cross Country.

Birchgrove Public School took part in the Premier's Sporting Challenge again in 2014. We had great participation across all years with students encouraged to be active every day and record their level of activity. We have upgraded some of our out dated sporting equipment using the grants received from the Premier's Sporting Challenge and school funds.

The children at Birchgrove all took part in a weekly program of sporting activities with the 'Got Game' company. This involved every class participating in 40 minutes of activity each week. The sports covered in 2014 were basketball, athletics, Tennis and dance. This was our third year with 'Got Game' and the children and teachers are enjoying the program.

Once again, children from Year 5 & 6 acted as runners at the State PSSA Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics Carnivals. 10 children helped out at each carnival presenting medals, hanging up results and doing odd jobs as required on the day. The Birchgrove children were great ambassadors for our school and received praise from the organisers and other schools involved in these events.

Robert Cormack and Anita Keating
Sports Coordinators

Teacher, 2014 Connected Learning

2014 was another successful year for IT at Birchgrove Public School. Birchgrove staff continued on their journey of building their own and their students ICT skills.

2014 has been an exciting year for connected learning at Birchgrove, with the rollout of an iPad program at the school. The schools iPad program included the purchase of 70 iPads, 2 trolleys and one desktop unit for charging and synchronising as well as a laptop for administering the program.



The necessary work to establish a wireless network was undertaken in the second half of 2013 and was funded by the school's P&C. Currently the iPads are distributed as follows:

- 10 for use in the Preschool
- 30 for use K-2
- 30 for use 3-6

There is scope to increase the program in future should the school see a need. The introduction of the iPad program increases our capability for connected learning significantly. In 2014 students and staff have been given time to explore the use of iPads in the classroom and discover ways in which they can enhance learning within the classroom. We shall move into a more formalised way of managing and distributing the iPads in 2015 to ensure equitable access across the stages.

Damien Fitzgerald
Computer Coordinator

School planning and evaluation 2012—2014

School evaluation processes

NSW public schools conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan. The processes used include:

- assessment and review of student progress regular review of all School Plan targets by staff and executive
- annual "planning day" to review targets and set priorities for teaching and learning programs, assessments and re-definition of the plans.
- Detailed analysis of NAPLAN and school assessment data to determine areas of academic achievement and areas for improvement.
- Reviewed teaching and learning programs in relation to student engagement, quality teaching elements, curriculum differentiation, and assessment
- surveys regarding outcomes

School planning 2012-2014:

School priority 1

Increased student outcomes and levels of achievement in numeracy for all students.

Outcomes from 2012–2014

Raise students' numeracy levels through the explicit and systematic teaching of identified areas of development as indicated by internal and external assessment measures.

Close the gap in numeracy for student achievement levels across the school as indicated by a decrease of the number of students in band 2 & 3

Increase the use of ICT to develop student and teacher skills in numeracy using multimodal tools.

Evidence of achievement of outcomes in 2014:

- Students are able to read and interpret mathematical problems evidenced by Newman's analysis and mathematical journals
- Increased use of pretesting, self assessment and the numeracy continuum as forms of assessment in numeracy
- Enhanced use of data to guide teaching and learning (Best Start, Plan, SMART, ICAS)
- CMIT, Counting on and TEN used to differentiate numeracy programs
- 10 Program introduced to help differentiate the curriculum in numeracy.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014

- Explicit teaching & professional development in the language of mathematics and working mathematically
- Whole school professional learning in quality programming and differentiation across the strands
- Professional development on the use of a range of assessment tools
- Application of the Numeracy K-10 curriculum framework to track student learning (PLAN)

School priority 2

High levels of well-being for all students

Outcomes from 2012–2014

- Meet the learning needs of all students
- Increase levels of resilience and use of positive social skills in all school contexts
- Maintain consistency in behavior management in all school contexts
- Raise the profile of physical fitness as a component of overall wellbeing

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2014:

- Decrease of incidents of negative behavior
- Special needs of students are met, evidenced by IEP's and a range of external and internal data sources
- Weekly Bounce Back lessons are taught K-6

- Reduction of students needing repeat visits to the reflections table
- Students are engaged in weekly focused sports lessons
- Increased level of a shared understanding of resilience across the school community.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- Continue to monitor Bounce Back! P to 6, increasing the resources to support the program and train additional staff in the philosophy of the resiliency program
- Assess student resiliency by administering Bounce Back Questionnaires K-6 and collating data
- Restorative Practices workshops presented by Terry O'Connell to students, staff reinforcing the restorative philosophy of Birchgrove
- Conduct parent interest workshops and newsletter information to increase the community understanding of wellbeing and resiliency
- Implement the new protocols in Learning and Support Team and evaluate the effectiveness of the L&ST to support students with social, emotion, physical or academic need,
- Continue to develop the ESR Welfare on Sentral to reflect the needs of the students and staff through additional training and development with the aim of having all staff accessing and entering data regularly.

Parent/caregiver, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2014, the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below.

CURRICULUM

Parents:

- Parent responses showed a high level of trust in their child's class teacher and that their children's individual learning needs are being catered for in the classroom.
- 97 % of Parents are satisfied with their child's academic progress at the school.
- 85 % of survey responses indicate that parents are aware of the Australian Curriculum and the new Board of Studies syllabuses in English and Mathematics.
- Parent feedback indicates that parents feel informed and included in their child's learning.

Staff:

- 100% of staff recognise the importance of the literacy and numeracy continuums as tools for tracking student progress and catering to the individual learning needs of their students.
- 100% of staff regularly use technology to enhance teaching and learning activities within the classroom.

Students:

- All students enjoy using technology to enhance their learning in English and Mathematics.
- 95% of students feel confident to request assistance from the class teacher when experiencing difficulty understanding concepts being taught.

MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Parents:

- Parents believe their child knows where to go to request assistance and support at school.
- Parents feel that the school provides a safe and caring environment for their children.
- Parents feel they can participate in decisions that affect their children's education and wellbeing.
- Parent/community feedback indicates that they believe the school provides teaching and learning programs that are tailored to the individual learning needs of its students.
- Parents feel that the school is a friendly environment to which they feel welcome and connected.

Staff:

- Birchgrove staff believe that supporting students' social and emotional wellbeing affects their behaviour positively impacts on achievement of learning outcomes.
- Staff are committed to offering diverse learning experiences and opportunities for students and families to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities.
- Staff feedback indicates that relationships with colleagues, students and community are respectful and responsive and that they feel valued and respected at our school.

Students:

- Student feedback indicates they believe parents and the community are welcome and actively involved in the school.
- Students feel the school is helpful and welcoming towards new students and families.

- Our school Prime Ministers and Ministries value the additional responsibilities they receive as leaders and enjoy the opportunity to work with the Student Representative Council to support local causes, participate in decision making and support people and communities in need through fundraising activities.
- Students in Years K to 4 have enjoyed participating in Peers Support Program and have valued the interactions the program has facilitated with other students in their peer group.
- Kindergarten students feel they have had plenty of opportunities to make new friends and have enjoyed performing at assemblies and special events.
- Students in Stage 3 have enjoyed the opportunities to participate in a broad range of extra curricular activities.



Book Week Character Parade

Future Directions 2015-2017 School Plan

NSW DEC is implementing a new school planning process for 2015-17. The new plan will be published on the school's website from the beginning of Term 2 2015.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1 - Quality learning in a dynamic school, encouraging motivated and passionate lifelong learners.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2 -Extend staff learning and leadership through a performance and development culture focused on quality teaching in 21st century learning classrooms.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3 - Maintaining and Supporting Positive Links with the Community.



Concert Band- Back to Balmain Performance

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.

Tracy Gray Principal
Robert Cormack Assistant Principal
Jodie Weber Assistant Principal
Damien Fitzgerald Assistant Principal
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Parents can find more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the report and have the opportunity to provide feedback about the report at:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/emsad/asr/index.php>