2008 Annual School Report
Ben Venue Public School
Messages

Principal's message

Students are offered many opportunities in academic, social, sporting and cultural areas and the promotion of achievement at individual, group and school level is supported and encouraged.

A group of students participated in the combined Choral Choir at the Opera House and the success of the school's participation in the Armidale Eisteddfod was recognised by parents, teachers and the community. The Year 6 Marimba Group entertained at the Argyle Concert in August at the Sydney Opera House.

I am appreciative of the extra time that teachers give unstintingly to coach teams, develop musical talents and support students to achieve to their personal best in many fields. Teachers and parents work together to provide many extra curricula activities.

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.

Judy Graham
Principal

P&C message

The P&C provided financial assistance to all students in the form of travel subsidies for the Thalgarrah visits, Music performances in Sydney, the K-2 SMASH program and the Young Leaders’ Conference. The P&C meets on the first Wednesday of the month and works towards a major fundraising Twilight Festival in November each year.

Ron Sullivan
President

Caitlin and Amy Schuman enjoying a fairy floss at the twilight festival.
Student representative’s message

In 2008 with the support of the P&C Association, a group of student leaders with parents and the Principal travelled to Sydney to attend the Young Leaders Conference. Students were able to be a part of a very large group of students and listen to wonderful speakers with good messages to inspire and develop leadership skills.

Rachel Roan and Sam Struck
School Captains

Our school at a glance

Staff and Students

Ben Venue Public School is the largest primary school in Armidale on the New England Tablelands in New South Wales. The school has a population of 580 students with approximately 6% Aboriginal students and a small non-English speaking background (NESB) population made up of families mostly associated with the University of New England (UNE). Each year the school has an increasing number of new students across classes from K-6 from other schools within New South Wales and interstate.

There have been a number of changes in staff over the past five years and the school now has a balance of teachers who have been at the school for a significant time, along with new executive teachers and other teachers new to the school.

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

The school has 23 classes and usually three composite classes each year to facilitate organisation around Year cohorts. This was the case again in 2007 with a K-1, 1/2 and a 4/5 composite.

The level of mobility of families is increasing steadily over the years. This has impacted on the number of matched students in the Basic Skills Tests (BST) and NAPLAN results.

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal Literacy program

Following the success of this program in 2007, the initiative was continued with added funding in 2008. Aboriginal students continue to show improvement in literacy areas and their attendance is monitored regularly to ensure that programs can be delivered successfully on a consistent basis. While overall literacy levels are still of concern for some students other students showed exceptional growth.

School Based Student Reporting

In 2008 the school introduced reporting to parents using the Outstanding to Limited scale. In response to the Department of Education directive the school reported in a five increment scale from Outstanding (the highest) through High, Sound, Basic to Limited (the lowest). Year groups of teachers were given time to moderate assessments between classes on the same year level. After trialling a number of school developed templates the staff were given the opportunity to use the computer based reporting software “School Based Student Reporting” (SBSR). Staff were trained and the system trialled over two reporting periods and found to be an improvement on using school based templates.

A collective set of recommendations for improvements in the template were forwarded to Sydney as feedback on the current template Version 3.

Music Initiatives

The middle school initiative continues to operate on Tuesdays with a Head Teacher from Duval High School working on an instrumental program that is supported by mentoring from students who have previously attended Ben Venue Public School. The orchestra continues to rebuild each year after Year 6 students move on to high school. The classroom based music program offers exciting opportunities for students to perform in a wide variety of school, community and wider events. In 2008 students in the Year 6 Marimba Group were chosen to play at the Sydney Opera House at the Argyle Concert. At this same concert a selected group of choir students performed in the State Choral Concert.
Student achievement in 2008

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3

In Year 3 in Literacy the NAPLAN results were reported from Band 1 (the lowest band) to Band 6 (the highest band). In overall literacy 57% of Ben Venue students were in Band 5 and Band 6 this compared to 49% of the State.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3

The percentage of Ben Venue Students in the top two bands in Numeracy was 54% compared to 40% of the state in the same two bands.

Boys scored better than girls in numeracy and girls outperformed the boys in literacy. Both boys and girls performed well above the State average.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5

In Year 5 in Literacy the NAPLAN results were reported from Band 3 (the lowest band) to Band 8 (the highest band).

Both boys and girls performed well above the State average. Year 5 girls performed slightly better than Year 5 boys in literacy.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5

Year 5 boys were well above the State average in Numeracy. Overall results for Year 5 in Numeracy were very close to state average. Results in Space and Geometry were significantly better than in Number Patterns and Algebra.

The literacy and numeracy results for Aboriginal students in Year 5 were below State average.

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>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student attendance profile

The attendance rates show a small increase in absences in 2008. This is due to the large number of absences attributed to a small number of students. A review of follow-up procedures has developed new strategies for implementation in 2009 which will assist with attendance monitoring.

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.

The following table shows class sizes as reported at the 2008 class size audit conducted on Tuesday 25 March 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll Class</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total per Year</th>
<th>Total in Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KB</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KF</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KM</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KP</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-1L</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-1L</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2K</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2K</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1H</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1X</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3D</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3H</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3T</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4O</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5G</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5R</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5W</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6A</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6H</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6T</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structure of classes

At the end of each year students are allocated to classes taking into account educational needs, friendships, access to programs, group dynamics and teacher information. Classes are structured to create harmonious work environments where students can work to achieve their personal best. Classes are parallel and students of similar ability are assigned to classes to facilitate group learning. In specific classes in order to facilitate
extension activities groups of like minded students are allocated to specific classes.

**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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Reading Recovery</td>
<td>0.945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27.645</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The School Counsellor and the support teacher learning Difficulties (STLA) also work at other schools with Ben Venue as their base school. The STLA works 0.7 at Ben Venue and the counsellor works 0.6 with variations to support other schools.

**Staff retention**

In 2008 a new school opened in Armidale and a number of students attended this school due to their religious affiliation. At the end of 2008 a staff member retired and an anticipated replacement was delayed until the numbers stabilised.

**Staff attendance**

Staff have access to leave entitlements such as sick leave. In 2008 the average daily attendance rate for staff, as determined by the Department, was 96.1%.

**Teacher qualifications**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Financial summary**

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

### Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>245 089.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>243 496.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>135 184.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>123 230.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>17 340.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>26 968.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td><strong>791 310.09</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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>32 023.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>55 431.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
<td>51 830.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>10 178.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
<td>706.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>190 381.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
<td>79 338.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
<td>56 113.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>50 634.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>9 105.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>19 846.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>33 554.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>589 145.52</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
<td><strong>202 164.57</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A full copy of the school’s 2008 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 2008**

**Achievements**

**Arts**

Students at Ben Venue have the opportunity to participate in many arts initiatives through the Relief from Face to Face (RFF) program. Activities throughout the year are class, Year and school based initiatives and performances at school and in the wider community. Achievements included:

- The Senior Marimba Group was invited to perform at the Choral Choir festival, Endeavour concert at the Sydney Opera House.
- The Year 6 production of the musical comedy “Phantasmogoria”.
- Thirty six students from Years 5 and Year 6 successfully auditioned and were invited to perform at the NSW Combined Choral Concert held at the Sydney Opera House.
Students rehearsing on the Opera House floor in the Green Room.

In the Armidale and District Eisteddfod Ben Venue groups performed exceptionally well achieving the following results:

- Year 6 Marimba Group - 1st place
- 3H Choral Speaking - 1st place
- 1/2K Ensemble - 1st place / Perpetual shield
- Orchestra - 2nd place
- KF Choral Speaking - 2nd place
- 4/5B - Ensemble – 3rd place
- Senior Choir - Highly Commended
- 3T Ensemble - Highly Commended
- 6T - Ensemble – Highly Commended

The Year 6 Marimba Group was invited to perform at the Eisteddfod Gala Concert in June.

An Art Club was formed for students to extend their art skills during lunch times. This was very well attended by many students who culminated their activity with a major work.

Other Programs

- “Waste into Art” Regional winners below with teacher Rebecca O’Hara

Joint Starmaker winners - Winona Rumble and Bree Davidson-Hill with Principal Judy Graham and Alice Rummery who was awarded third place.

Sport

Student-centred physical education and sport programs planned and implemented by teachers and accompanied by strong parental support have resulted in outstanding results for our students. Successes include:

- Regional finalists in boys hockey
- North West Champions in girls soccer
- Boys soccer state finalists.

- Boys cricket played in the regional finals.
- North West Region representation in athletics at the respective state carnival. 10 students
- Armidale Zone champions in athletics and swimming and Cross Country.
- Hannah Shield winners for boys swimming. Girls were runners up.
- Runners up in the Wesfarmers Landmark Cup rugby union.
• Significant representation in the Armidale Zone for rugby union, cross country, athletics, swimming, hockey, boys and girls soccer, basketball, softball and cricket.

School based sporting initiatives
• Tucabia PE program was run successfully for all Kindergarten students with strong parental support.
• Intensive Learn to Swim school run for non-swimmers supported by parents and community helpers.
• Successful K-2 mini Olympics carnival run with strong parent support and student enjoyment.
• K-2 participation and enjoyment of the SMASH program at present in Term 4.

Welfare
Staff at Ben Venue have worked to maintain a high standard of student welfare in the school. This has included the continued work by the student welfare focus group in developing a new student welfare and discipline booklet as well as ongoing professional learning to keep abreast of the latest developments in many welfare areas. These have included:
• Staff update and training in Anaphylaxis
• Update of Asthma Friendly School guidelines
• Update of Safe Conduct of Sport and Excursion guidelines
• Individual Behaviour Plans.

Other
Other initiatives that need to be highlighted include:
• The organisation and promotion of book week included the participation of many students in the Book Week parade of characters

Academic Competitions
In International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (ICAS) the following results were achieved:

- Australasian Mathematics Competition
  5 Distinctions, 17 Credits
- Australian Schools Science Competition
  1 High Distinction, 2 Distinctions, 7 Credits
- Australian Schools Computer Competition
  4 Distinctions, 6 Credits
- Australian Schools English Competition
  4 Distinctions, 8 Credits
- Australian Schools Spelling Competition
  4 Distinctions, 8 credits
• **Premiers Spelling Bee** – Four students represented Ben Venue at the Regional Premier’s Spelling Bee.

**Academic**

In the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), the results across the Years 3 and 5 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 8.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in the assessments.

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

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

The NAPLAN involved 82 students in Year 3 and 96 students in Year 5.

**Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3**

Literacy results in Year 3 were significantly above the state with 57% of students in the top two bands compared to 49% of the state. Seventy three per cent of students were in Band 4 or higher. Students also performed higher than like school groups in another comparison - (refer to graph). The percentage of students in the lowest bands was below the state in reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation.

Boys and girls achieved well above state level – Yr 3 boys achieved a Mean Score of 420.9 compared to boys in the state at 409.6. Yr 3 girls achieved a Mean Score in Literacy 437.4 compared to girls in the state at 429.7. Teachers will continue to build on these results focusing on specific groups to improve individual results.

**Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3**

Numeracy results in Year 3 were outstanding. In overall numeracy 54% of students achieved in the top two bands. In Number, Patterns and Algebra 37% of students were in the top band compared to 22% of the state. Students performed very well over the strands. The percentage of students in the lowest bands was equal to the percentage of the state. Teaching will focus on consolidating division and exploring aspects of position.
Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5

Literacy results in Year 5 were pleasing in most areas with 70% of students achieving in the top three bands – Bands 6, 7 and 8. In Reading 60% of Ben Venue students were in the top three bands while 73% of students were in the top three bands in Writing. In Spelling 61% of students were in the top three bands and the focus in 2009 will be on achieving higher results in the top two bands and moving the results from Band 6 up to Band 7 or Band 8.

Ben Venue had a similar number of students to the state in the lowest two bands and literacy across all areas will continue to be a focus in 2009.
Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5

In numeracy overall 54% of students were in the top three bands and in the lowest bands Year 5 students at Ben Venue achieved better results than the state across all areas. Numbers Patterns and Algebra will be the strand identified for focus in 2009.

Progress in literacy

Average progress in reading for matched students.

The results for matched students was inaccurate as a number of students were included who were not at the school in Year 3. This affected the 2006-2008 figures in Literacy.
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 at Ben Venue in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy is compared to these minimum standards. The percentages Ben Venue students achieving at or above these standards are reported below.

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

The Aboriginal student population at Ben Venue has increased over recent years to approximately 43 students. An Aboriginal literacy focus group applied successfully for funding under the Parent School Partnerships Initiative. Ben Venue continues to focus on improving reading and spelling outcomes for Aboriginal students to year appropriate levels. The programs at the school are devised and implemented by teachers with a strong background in literacy development. Aboriginal literacy support programs run in collaboration with classroom teacher programs. This program offers increased opportunities for literacy success in the classroom. The Aboriginal Literacy Support initiative was embedded into the RFF timetable to maximize input.

The communication established with Aboriginal parents assists the achievement of improved attendance and literacy.

Attendance monitored and absences followed up in all instances. The Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) assists the school to monitor attendance.

During NAIDOC week there were a number of performances by many of the creative arts groups within the school. The NAIDOC Assembly well received by the school community.
Multicultural education

Aspects of multicultural education permeate the Connected Outcomes Groups (COGs) units where lives, environments and lifestyles are explored, valued and supported through detailed studies and invited guests.

Harmony Day Assembly

To celebrate Harmony Day Ben Venue held a special assembly where students paraded their National Dress and selected students spoke about education in their country of birth or ethnic background. Students were from Thailand, Fiji, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Italy, China, France China, Mongolia, India, Bangladesh and other countries around the world. A visiting group of Thai teachers performed a national dance which greatly entertained the students, staff and parents who attended. A group of Aboriginal students performed a welcome and farewell dance.

Respect and responsibility

The Core Rules for Government Schools engender the understandings around respect and responsibility, Students, teachers and parents are more aware of the rules and refer to them often as a standard for acceptable and appropriate behaviour.

Respecting the rights of others to hold different opinions and accepting responsibility for their own actions towards others are central themes in discipline interviews at all levels at Ben Venue. Behaviour programs and skill streaming around respect and responsibility are evident in many classrooms.

Captains and Prefects sign a copy of the Core Rules to agree that they will abide by the rules and help others to do so as well.

Recent library purchases support the awareness of core values. Books suitable for classroom use and available for individual borrowing, focus on respect and responsibility.

Progress on 2008 targets

Target 1

Review procedures practices and guidelines for administering prescribed medications and developing Health Care Plans for students.

Key Strategies

- A review of the current departmental guidelines of procedures and practices and documentation was undertaken.
- Health professionals were engaged to assist with specific Health Care Plans
- Regular reviews on emergency care procedures with high risk students were undertaken with all key personnel involved.

Achievements include:

- Staff have an increased awareness and understanding of policy and procedures.
- Practices and procedures for administering prescribed medications are compliant with policy procedures and practices.
- Parents, teachers and students are aware of the existence of Individual Health Care Plans and they are displayed in rolls and shared areas for all staff.
- Staff training in Anaphylaxis Awareness,
- Ben Venue is part of the Asthma Friendly Schools Program.

Target 2

To update supervision and safety requirements for excursions and sporting activities.

Key Strategies

- Referral booklets for teachers for all sporting activities likely to be organised during the year have been downloaded and guidelines and ratios clearly outlined.
- Up to date risk management plans for all sporting and excursion activities have been created for activities and events likely to be carried out during the year.
- Checklists have been devised to ensure that all risk management procedures are followed.
• Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of Sport and Physical Activities training for all staff was reviewed at a School Development Day.
• Regulations and rules relating to permission notes and safety requirements for all excursions and physical activities was discussed and updated.

Key evaluations
It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2008 our school carried out evaluations of Reporting to parents and Assessment.

Educational and management practice

Background
The introduction of the new Reporting to Parents policy developed new guidelines and the introduction of a more standardised system for reporting to parents. Report formats at Ben Venue have been reviewed and improved over time, but the assessment practices required for reporting on an outstanding to limited (O to L) scale meant a major change in the way achievement was collectively assessed and reported.

- Staff inserviced and reported mandatory requirements for reporting to parents.
- The DET report format was explored and a decision made initially not to use it as the progress towards compliance was to start with using O to L in English and Mathematics but not other Key Learning Areas.
- Full compliance was expected by the end of 2008.

Staff, Parents and students were surveyed about the report formats.

- All staff felt that the workload had increased significantly and the computer related issues were very frustrating.
- Parents generally liked the new report format stating it included much more information about student performance.
- Students felt there was more to read and that parents had more to discuss with them after the report went home.

Findings and conclusions

- School Based Student Reporting (SBSR) works best if teachers moderate collaboratively at year levels to consistently judge student performance.
- Some parents felt that the reports were ‘information overload’ but generally liked the new format.
- For SBSR to continue, all staff indicated that computer issues must be resolved.

Future directions

- Organise Stage based assessment folders with rubrics and moderating plans to assist consistent teacher judgement.
- Assign Teacher Professional Learning funds to support exemplary practices around moderating and allocating grades to students for reporting.
- Review the format after each reporting period for the next two years to determine strengths and areas for improvement
- Send feedback on SBSR to Assessment and Reporting Directorate

Curriculum

Background
The Curriculum review became very closely aligned with the Reporting to Parents. Teachers worked collaboratively to view power points and curriculum recommendations on the DET website to successfully develop exemplary skills to moderate initially in English and Mathematics and by the end of the year across all Key Learning Areas.

Findings and conclusions

- Teachers need to bring assessments to moderate with some initial organisation of achievement levels.
- All teachers must be present at each moderating session.
- That a standard administration procedure for assessments be devised and adhered to in all future assessments.
- Rubrics assist the allocation of achievement levels and should be a necessary inclusion in future assessment plans and overviews.

Future directions

- By Term One 2009 all Stages will have an assessment folder containing plans, assessments and consistent administration practices.
• Rubrics will be developed and refined after the mid year reporting period.
• All teachers are expected to use the Stage based assessment folder as per the plan.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction
In 2008 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.
The newsletter is the main source of communication for the school and views were sought to ascertain the effectiveness of this communication.

One hundred percent of respondents agreed that the newsletter was informative and celebrated achievements across the school.

Issues and Concerns
• Absences from school can often mean that families do not get the newsletter on Mondays as the youngest in the family takes it home
• Teachers who are out of their rooms on Monday afternoon for various lessons and meetings have to rely on others to hand out the newsletter
• Some parents suggested an electronic version to save on paper.
• The monthly calendar put in the newsletter does not stay in all newsletters and parents would like it to remain and be updated as the need arises.

Future Directions
• Parents, teachers and students should know what is in the weekly newsletter.
• The calendar is to be placed and maintained in the newsletter.
• Parents are to be invited to send in their e-mail address to create a newsletter group.
• The newsletter is to contain more student work samples on a regular basis.
• Parents are encouraged to submit individual student successes in out of school pursuits.
• Community information and advertising must fit in with the standards and ethos of the school.

Professional learning

Professional development
Many professional development activities were school based and facilitated opportunities for teachers to engage in professional dialogue in many key areas of curriculum and teaching practice.

• Four teachers attended Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training
• Two Teachers completed the Anti-Racism Contact Officer Training
• A teacher attended the Kahootz training
• Three teachers completed the Smartboard training after the system was installed at Ben Venue.
• Two teachers and a parent attended the Framework for School Accountability
• One teacher Healthy Canteen Champions course
• A number of teachers attended Moderating and SBSR refinement
• All staff were involved in writing refined COGs units as a part of a school based initiatives.
• Staff and parents attended school promotional inservice activities.

School development 2009 – 2011

The School Improvement Plan follows the State and Regional Plans and the priority areas are reviewed in June each year when committees and focus groups are also reviewed or reformed according to staff changes.

Targets for 2009

Targets for the three years 2009-2011 have been set as a part of the Ben Venue School Plan. These targets have been set in response to the NSW Office of Schools Plan and the 2009 New England Region Plan.

Target 1
Reduce the % of students in Band 5 by 10% and increase the corresponding % in Band 6 or higher in English and Mathematics in NAPLAN.

Strategies to achieve this target include:
• Establish a Numeracy Support Team (NST) with a representative from each stage.
• Train staff in the Count Me In Too program and Counting On Program where needed
• Implement the Count Me in Too or Counting On Program as part of regular teaching program
• Monitor consistent assessment practices that allow students to demonstrate understanding against all performance band descriptors
• Reduce the reliance on textbooks as major teaching tool and use of a variety of teaching resources with textbooks focused on consolidation.
• Staff trained in curriculum differentiation to cater for talented students
• Aboriginal students personalised learning plans (PLPs) and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) will address identified areas of concern in numeracy

Our success will be measured by:
Increasing the proportion of students meeting or exceeding numeracy proficiency standards in accordance with the State Plan targets.
Decrease the proportion of lowest performing students not meeting numeracy minimum standards in the State Plan targets
The extent that students in Band 5 reduce and Band 6 increase.

**Target 2**

**Train four teachers to implement the best start program across Kindergarten classes**

Strategies to achieve this target include:
• Engage the services of Best Start consultancy support in the school.
• Implement the Best Start Kindergarten Assessment program to identify numeracy learning that children bring to school.
• Up skill teachers in the use of Best Start on line so that the full range of Best Start resources may be used.
• Implement Best Start assessment in the first week of Kindergarten.
• Use this information to plan and deliver quality early years numeracy and literacy teaching.
• Reassess students at the end of Semester 1 and analyse the data obtained.

Our success will be measured by:
• Completion of Best Start survey with all Kindergarten students on entering school.
• Effective use of the data in programming and planning by Kindergarten teachers.
• More informed teaching practices leading to greater achievement for all Kindergarten students.

**Target 3**

*Implement “You Can Do It” (YCDI) throughout the school community.*

Strategies to achieve this target include 5 areas of action.
• Train school leadership, in YCDI to lead the implementation after extensive consultation with staff and support services.
• The formation of a new staff focus group to drive the introduction and management of YCDI.
• To access systems support to devise specific strategies for individual student behaviour plans.
• The inclusion of YCDI as a line item in the school budget to help fund release, resources and teacher professional learning.
• Evaluation of the program at numerous key stages throughout the introduction and implementation of YCDI

Success will be measured by:
• Increased take-up of proactive student wellbeing approaches based around the five keys to success
• Observing a school culture and practice that respects and responds to every student’s aspirations, culture, gender and learning potential
• Monitoring positive incidents on the Student Incident Tracker SIT to be equal to or greater than the recording of negative incidents.
• Improved social and emotional wellbeing and skills for life for students, teachers and whole school culture
• Students and teachers confidently using the language of YCDI.

**Target 4**

*Diminish the gap in literacy/numeracy achievement between Aboriginal students (NAPLAN) and all students at Ben Venue Public School.*

Strategies to achieve this target include:
• Implementing the 2008 Aboriginal Education and Training Policy.
• Implementing and applying the Count Me In Too Indigenous initiative within K-6 policies for numeracy.
• Implementing a positive welfare program to encourage student success (You Can Do It).
• Devising PLPs and IEPs for Aboriginal students to address identified areas of weakness in literacy and numeracy.
• Developing an inclusive school environment that encourages and supports productive partnerships with local Aboriginal communities by establishing a representative parent group.

Our success will be measured by:
• A diminished gap in literacy/Numeracy achievement between Aboriginal students (NAPLAN) and all students at Ben Venue Public School.
• Increased Aboriginal parental engagement in supporting learning at Ben Venue for all students.

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.

Judy Graham Principal
Wally O’Hara Deputy Principal
Linda Bishop Assistant Principal
Ron Sullivan P&C President
Judi Polak - School Administrative Staff

School contact information
Ben Venue Public School
Erskine Street Armidale 2350
Ph: 02 67724263
Fax: 67712037
Email: benvenue-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 1198

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: