Front Cover
Year 6 student Angela Fittler performing as a member of the Senior Dance Group – ‘Seasons’.
Messages

Principal’s message
Ben Venue is a school with a proud tradition of achievement and academic success. At Ben Venue Public School students are offered many opportunities in academic, social, sporting and cultural areas. The promotion of achievement at individual, group and school level is supported and encouraged. Each year the P&C supports student leaders to travel with me on a Leadership excursion to Sydney. This year we enjoyed a visit to a city school and also to the New South Wales Parliament. Students were already in Sydney for two Opera House Concerts where they performed with distinction.

Students highlighted the success of the school’s music program by achieving great results at the Armidale Eisteddfod. Individual students and student groups have also achieved outstanding results in academic, sporting and cultural pursuits and I commend the commitment and enthusiasm they exhibit in varied areas of talent and expertise.

I am very appreciative of the extra time teachers and community members give unstintingly to coach teams, develop musical talents and to support students achieve their personal best in many skills including debating and public speaking. In 2011 a Multicultural Parent Support Group commenced and this was continued in 2012.

Teachers and parents work together to provide many extra curricula activities. Parents provide on-going support for many school activities and their input is both valued and appreciated. 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 Ben Venue P&C is the primary forum through which parents and/or guardians can become involved in planning and decision making within our school. We are always happy to welcome new members to strengthen our team.

Our major fundraising activity for 2012 was a successful Daylight Festival, held in late November.

The Parents Club, a subcommittee of the P&C provides many fund raising activities throughout the year, examples of which are; the ‘Bulb Express’, a pie and lamington drive as well as running a canteen at the Ben Venue Cross Country and the District Cross Country.

The P&C is committed to providing support to the school students and staff, and we continue to subsidise the costs of school activities and equipment.

It’s always nice to see where our fundraising money ends up. During 2012 we saw the installation of more interactive whiteboards as well as the delivery of our marimba trailer.

As P&C President I would like to thank Judy Graham, Wally O’Hara and the staff of Ben Venue as well as parents and carers who have supported Ben Venue throughout 2012. Lastly I would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of the Ben Venue P&C and Parents Club for all their time and effort.

Mark Simpson
P&C President
2012

Judy Graham
Principal
Our school at a glance

Ben Venue is a modern, well-presented school in the north of Armidale, with new classrooms, library, multi-purpose hall, special programs room, outdoor learning area, large shade shelter, sporting facilities and technology resources. Ben Venue has a strong history of high academic achievement with students demonstrating a love of learning across academic, social, sporting, cultural and welfare programs. Students are supported and encouraged to achieve personal excellence.

The school enjoys a balance of teachers who have been at the school for a significant time, with other executive and teachers new to the school. Teachers and parents work together to provide opportunities for students to participate in many activities and excursions. All students wear the school uniform and many represent the school at District, Regional, and National levels. The school is acknowledged in broader educational arenas for its Music, Arts and sporting achievements. Environmental awareness is actively encouraged through a variety of on-going initiatives.

Ben Venue has an active Parents and Citizens Association which financially supports many individuals, groups and programs each year to assist students to maximise the opportunities available.

Students

Ben Venue always has a large cohort of students in Year 3 and Year 5 who achieve results within or above the State results. These students, of varying abilities, have sustained very good overall achievement levels over time. As a proud public school Ben Venue’s NAPLAN results in 2012 were within or above the State average.

Students from a diverse range of backgrounds and abilities achieved results in all areas which indicated personal improvement in outcomes. As teachers work collaboratively to improve achievement in all areas, some results were highlighted as exemplars while other areas were analysed as areas to build on in 2013. The diagnostic nature of these assessments is the main area for focus on teaching and learning. Results are achieved when teachers work together through Kindergarten to Year 6. Ben Venue Public School has achieved excellent results over time and will continue to strive to ensure students achieve their personal best results.

Significant programs and initiatives

School music performance program

The Ben Venue School Choir successfully auditioned to perform at the Opera House as a part of the ‘Festival of Choral Music’. This is the fifth year that the choir has been selected and 39 students performed at the Argyle Concert. The choir was supported by conductor Sally Spillane and accompanist Tina Townsend.

Many of these students were also part of the Senior Marimba Ensemble which was also successful in auditioning for an individual performance at the concert. This was a wonderful achievement as very few ensembles throughout NSW are chosen for this individual honour.

During Term 4 students from the Junior and Senior Choirs were also asked to perform as part of the New England Sings Choral Performance which involved singers from all over the New England Region.

Senior Marimba Group on stage at the Sydney Opera House
Student achievement in 2012

Ben Venue was awarded two major awards at the New England Regional Excellence Awards:

- Excellence in Student Leadership, a school award, for our student leadership program over many years and
- Excellence in Student Achievement to Year 6 student, Bradley Lucas.

In the International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (ICAS) run by the University of NSW, Ben Venue was successful in gaining excellent results over a number of competitions and grades. Results in each of the subject competitions are as follows:

- Science - 4 Credits and 3 Distinctions
- Computer Skills - 1 Credit, 1 Distinction and 1 High Distinction.
- Spelling - 4 Credits and 3 Distinctions
- Writing - 2 Credits and 3 Distinctions
- English - 3 Credits, 1 Distinction and 2 High Distinctions.

Two students, Morgane Sercombe and Bradley Lucas were successful in winning sections of the Henry Lawson Writing Competition. Both students travelled to Grenfell to receive their awards.

Adam Lucas won the District Final and went on to represent Ben Venue Public School at the Regional Multicultural Speaking Competition in Tamworth. Angus Lawrence was awarded Highly Commended. Two other students, Rohan Lawrence and Leo Schmude also participated extremely well with Leo receiving a Highly Commended.

Ben Venue also received a plaque for raising the highest total donation in the region for Stewart House.
Conor Dennehy was successfully selected to represent NSW in the State Tennis Team. Conor was also nominated Team Captain when the team competed in the National PSSA titles in Perth.

Adam Lucas was awarded the ‘On Your Soapbox’ Award for Public Speaking in the New England Region in 2012.

Student information

DEC policy requires the reporting of information for all students must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

In 2012 classes were formed in order to reduce the number of composite classes. The only composite class was in Stage 3 where we had a 5/6 composite. Because of this the Kindergarten classes were larger than expected. This was further exaggerated when additional enrolments were received later in Term 1 from families of newly enrolling UNE students. Many of these later enrolling students were of a Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE). This has meant an increase in the staffing provision for English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching.

Because of the large Kindergarten enrolments and the lower than usual Year 6 numbers, it is expected that Ben Venue may grow to 24 classes in 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll class</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total per year</th>
<th>Total in class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>KD</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KF</td>
<td>K</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>KP</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>KW</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1E</td>
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<tr>
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<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2K</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3C</td>
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<td>30</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3F</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3W</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4R</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4S</td>
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<tr>
<td>5I</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5W</td>
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<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6H</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>5/6H</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6M</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student enrolment profile

Student numbers have remained stable around 550 and with increasing numbers of international students attending the University of New England (UNE) it is anticipated that numbers will rise in 2013 to around 580. There is a balance between male and female students and this is always considered when classes are organised.

An increased number of students move in and out of the school associated with changes in occupation and job opportunities for parents. The movement of students from interstate is a feature of this increasing student population trend. Large numbers of new arrivals has seen the steady increase in staffing allocations to cater for non-English speaking background students.

Management of non-attendance

During 2012 classroom teachers kept a manual roll in each classroom. Rolls were marked within the first 15 minutes of the school day and sent directly to the front office where the data was entered on to the school OASIS system. Teachers follow up each absence with a gentle reminder by way of a note to parents if absences were unexplained. If the absence is not explained after a first request an additional note is sent home explaining that absences must be explained. A third letter stating the legal requirement was sent after this.

Roll absences were also monitored using the absence rates report from the OASIS system and students who fall below 85% attendance were followed up by the Deputy Principal using a phone intervention strategy. Failure to respond resulted in a referral to the Home School Liaison Officer.

Comparison of 2012 attendance rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender balance over time</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>291</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>301</td>
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</table>

Student attendance profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>95.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>95.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>96.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>95.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data above and adjacent shows that the attendance rate of most Year groups has been maintained at about 94% to 96% with some Year levels falling whilst others have risen. The overall attendance rate has improved by 0.5%. Even though the attendance rate is well above the State average of 94.3% the school participated in a school review of attendance procedures and has agreed to implement recommendations designed to improve and streamline attendance monitoring processes. With improved roll supervision, the use of a phone intervention strategy and closer communication with the Home School Liaison Officer, the school was able to improve an already excellent attendance rate.

Staff information

DEC policy requires the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

In 2012 a School Counsellor was based at Ben Venue but worked at other schools throughout the week.

The National Education Agreement requires schools to report on Indigenous composition of their workforce. Ben Venue has one teacher who identifies as Aboriginal.

Under the ‘Every Student Every School’ (ESES) program the school was appointed a full time Learning and Support Teacher (LAST). For Ben Venue the appointment was at the Assistant Principal level. There are four teachers in Early Stage 1, eight teachers in Stage 1, six teachers in Stage 2 and five teachers in Stage 3. Other teachers at the school are involved in the delivery of the ‘Relief from Face to Face’ Program which has a focus on Library, Music, Computers and Personal Development and Health.
Staff establishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Reading Recovery</td>
<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning and Support teacher</td>
<td>1@ AP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>4.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staff retention

Ben Venue has a mix of teachers with differing years of experience, from teachers who have been teaching for many years through to those who have recently entered the teaching service. Some teachers took 12 months leave in 2012 on the DET’s Four for Five Plan. At the end of 2012 a number of staff will retire.

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>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>28%</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.

Date of financial summary: 30/11/2012

**Income**

- Balance brought forward: $298736.20
- Global funds: $288332.98
- Tied funds: $139575.34
- School & community sources: $117257.68
- Interest: $11714.74
- Trust receipts: $27216.88
- Canteen: $64003.50
- Total income: $946837.32

**Expenditure**

- Teaching & learning
  - Key learning areas: $32601.95
  - Excursions: $44929.91
  - Extracurricular dissections: $69287.48
- Library: $9044.63
- Training & development: $1156.47
- Tied funds: $126182.43
- Casual relief teachers: $78432.28
- Administration & office: $75637.65
- School-operated canteen: $53431.15
- Utilities: $60535.41
- Maintenance: $10350.02
- Trust accounts: $36363.97
- Capital programs: $57371.37
- Total expenditure: $655324.72

Balance carried forward: $291512.60

A full copy of the school’s 2012 Financial Statement is tabled at the Annual General the P&C. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2012

Achievements

**Arts**

**Arts in Concert**

In 2012 Ben Venue Public School was well represented in the New England Regional Arts In Concert series of concerts held over two nights in Term 3. The school had two circus groups: Cirque de Ben Venue ‘Peta Pan’ and Cirque de Ben Venue ‘Star Wars’.

Also performing was the highly accomplished Senior Marimba Group which performed so well.

Kindergarten students on the Autumn Festival float – ‘Seasons’
at the Opera House later in Term 4. Our Senior Girls Dance Group ‘Seasons’ also performed. This group performed a ribbon dance. (Front cover photo depicting one of the dancers-Angela Fittler).

The Ben Venue Choir combined with other New England Region Choirs and performed under the coordination of Ben Venue teacher Sally Spillane.

Orchestra

2012 was a wonderful year for the BVPS Orchestra. This year Rob Woodhouse from the New England Conservatorium of Music (NECOM) was the conductor and Bronwyn Jones has worked closely with the Orchestra to organise the administration and help the many new members. In 2012 the Orchestra has grown to 20 members. In 2013 we are looking to further extend this opportunity to Ben Venue students.

Some highlights from 2012 include the performance at the Armidale Eisteddfod. They performed ‘Rock Around the Clock’ and ‘Playing Around’ and were very proud to come second in a very competitive section.

The Orchestra has enjoyed performing to the BVPS School Community in several school assemblies as well as the Daylight Festival. We have also taken our talent into the community through performances at Saumerez for a Seniors’ lunch; at Autumn Lodge in the main dining room and at Wollemi. A highlight was when some of the residents got up and danced during our performance of ‘Rock Around the Clock’. To end the year the orchestra performed ‘Chariots of Fire’ at Presentation Day.

Logo Competition

For the first time this year, Ben Venue entered the ‘Far Out Science’ Logo Competition. Initially the call went out to all schools and students to harness their creative powers and help design a logo for the theme: ‘Unlocking Australia’s Potential’. Ben Venue not only had the winning logo, but also both runners-up in the competition. The winner of the logo competition was Lily Scales. The runners-up were Niamh Evans and Tara Bourke.

The winning logo has been and will continue to be featured on all promotional materials as well as on the T-shirts worn by the demonstrators at events until the competition is held again next year.

School Acquisitive Art Prize: Let’s Hang It!

The University of New England School Acquisitive Art Prize (UNESAP) is an annual competition with the purpose of promoting interest in visual arts and encouraging young artists throughout regional New South Wales.

With over 600 entries, 66 students were selected as finalists and their works ‘hung’ at NERAM in the exhibition. A panel of experts judged the works submitted to the exhibition. Two students from Ben Venue PS were selected for exhibition at NERAM.

Tara Bourke ‘Chicken Little’
Jacob Pearce ‘The Little Red Hen’
Prize winners were announced at the opening in each Division, in addition to a number of other new Awards. One of the new Awards included in 2012 was the Director’s Choice Award. This award was presented to Tara Bourke for ‘Chicken Little’.

Operation Art

Operation Art provides opportunities for students K-10 to demonstrate their talents in Visual Arts through a major exhibition while working to contribute to a visual environment for children in hospital.

This year’s Operation Art entries totalled 789 from all over New South Wales, four were from Ben Venue.

Emily Devlin – ‘The Rainbow Fish’
Lilly Hunt – ‘Autumn’
Tara Bourke – ‘Out for a Scratch’
Sophie Gale – ‘Chickenista’

The official opening was at the Armory Gallery Sydney Olympic Park where over 4000 people visited on the first day. The exhibition was open until the October 21, 7 days a week 10am – 4pm and had just under 11,000 visitors which was 3,000 more than last year! Operation Art also provides valuable professional learning opportunities for teachers. This year, Tara Bourke’s: ‘Out for a Scratch’ and Sophie Gale’s: ‘Chickenista’, were selected for inclusion in the Teacher Resource Book, which we are looking forward to purchasing.

In the future the Arts Unit behind Operation Art is hoping to have the capability to have a ‘virtual tour’ online. This would be very beneficial to the students of Ben Venue, as we are quite a distance from Sydney! Ben Venue looks forward to participating in the exhibition again next year.

Eisteddfod

Class 1A were awarded first place winning the Armidale Dumaresq Council Perpetual Shield.

Class 2K were awarded first place winning the Armidale Dumaresq Council Perpetual Shield.

Class 5W gave a wonderful performance combining marimbas, glockenspiels, tambourines and fabulous drumming by Mitchell Hayden. They too were awarded first place winning the Armidale Lion’s Club Perpetual Shield.

Class 5W performing

Class 5/6H gave a great performance of ‘Jamaica Jazz’ combining marimbas, glockenspiels and percussion instruments. They were awarded second place.

Class 4S were next in the same section and were awarded third place.

Our School Orchestra performing ‘Rock Around The Clock’ were awarded second place in a very competitive section for their fantastic performance.

The Year 6 Marimba Group performed ‘Pachelbel’s Canon’ and ‘Fresco’ combining marimbas and lovely flute playing by Emily Barlin and Maddy King. They were awarded second place.

Our Senior Choir performed ‘Shenandoah’ and ‘Where The Mountain Meets The Sea’ and were awarded third place in their section.
Sport

Premier’s Sporting Challenge

A number of students from Years 5 and 6 attended the initial workshop for the ‘Learning to Lead’ 2012 program at Duval High School. Students participated in a variety of activities conducted by Year 9 Student Leaders and Development Officers that covered Rugby, Softball, Touch, Basketball, Golf, Small Team games and Basic Sports Skills.

Students who are new to the program were enthusiastic and involved with all sessions. They reported they had learned a great deal about teaching others and this was illustrated with a number of Year 5 leaders conducting a brief session involving golf skills upon our return to school later that day. It is anticipated that our ‘Learning to Lead’ students will continue to become actively involved in leadership roles within our school.

Hockey

This year the Ben Venue boys’ and girls’ hockey teams were both Regional Finalists in the PSSA State Knockout Competitions. The girls’ team played matches against Armidale City PS and Guyra Central School before progressing to the Regional Final where they were defeated by Tamworth South PS. The boys’ team also played matches against Armidale City PS and Guyra Central School before being defeated by Tamworth South in their Regional Final match.

A number of students from our teams were selected in the North West teams. These players were Alana Low, Alicia Ball, Tarnie Hillard, Hayley Lennon, Tao Grieves and Kiran Lennon.

This year Ben Venue students were again strongly involved in the WHK Cameron Primary Indoor Hockey Competition run on Friday afternoons at Armidale High School. Ben Venue’s participation has grown and we now have 11 teams in the competition, with 80 players from all year levels K-6 involved.

Rugby

2012 was a successful year for the Ben Venue Rugby Program. 54 students participated in the Rugby Gala Day in Term 2. This was the first time that girls had been entered in the junior division. This day emphasised skill development sessions and a round robin with other local schools. Two of our teams contested the final. The senior division team won the local gala day and were placed in the Regional Finals.

The Wednesday afternoon competition ‘The Ace Embroidery Cup’, saw Ben Venue compete with three teams. Two of these teams were in the 3/4 Division where both teams were extremely competitive and demonstrated outstanding skills and sportsmanship.

The third team was the senior team which was extremely popular and dominated most games and also played with outstanding skill and sportsmanship. 10 players were selected to attend the northern trials and consequently two players gained selection in the North West team to compete in the State PSSA Championships.
Autumn Festival Parade

School Captains at the ANZAC service

New Long Jump pit and run up synthetic track.

A close finish in Cross Country

Cunningham House Captains

Blaxland House Captains

Oxley House Captains

Sturt House Captains

Ben Venue – Where great things
are always happening!
Ben Venue competed in the Armidale Football Knockout Gala Day. They were the overall champions on the day defeating Armidale City 5-1, Uralia Central 10-0 and Martins Gully 5-2.

The boys then went on to play Tamworth Public school in round 4 of the knockout. They played a very tough match that could have gone either way. Unfortunately they lost 2-1 however they displayed great sportsmanship on the day.

Swimming Scheme

53 students from Year 2 participated in the School Swimming Scheme in 2012. We had near perfect weather for the two weeks and all students made terrific gains in their swimming ability and water confidence. Some students began the fortnight without the confidence to put their face in the water. By the end of the second week they were swimming introductory freestyle up to five metres.

Cross Country

Ben Venue Public School hosted the Armidale Zone Cross Country at Bellevue Oval. Ben Venue was the overall winning school with wins in 8/9 years girls event and the 11 yrs girls and boys events.

An Armidale District PSSA team went onto the Regional Cross Country where Jaimie McLoughlin (second), Meg Lye (third), Zac Davidson (fourth), Emma Collins (sixth) performed very well and progressed to represent North West Region at the State Cross Country Championships.

North West PSSA Gymnastics

71 students from fifteen schools from across the North West Region took up the chance to compete in the North West PSSA Gymnastics at the Armidale City Gymnastics Centre in three of the Gymnastics GymSports Disciplines: Men’s Gymnastics, Women’s Gymnastics and Rhythmic Gymnastics, on August 3 2012.

Men’s Gymnastics

Tao Grieves was first Overall Level 0 whilst in the Level 0 combined junior and senior team Ben Venue was placed second.

In the Level 1 Team event Ben Venue was placed first.

At Level 2 Stephen Offner was first overall, Ryan McCormack second overall and Charlie Selby was third overall. This meant that in the Level 2 Team results Ben Venue finished first. Ben Venue was placed highest overall team in the Men’s competition.

Women’s Gymnastics

In the Level 1 Preparation Loren Frost was placed first overall. In the Level 1 Preparation combined junior and senior team results Ben Venue was placed first. In the Level 1 Team results Ben Venue was placed first. In the Level 3 Preparation results, Morgane Sercombe was placed first. In the Level 4 event Bianca Kiehne was placed first.

Rhythmic Gymnastics

In the Level 1 competition Bronte Wood was first and Chloe Dowd third.

Swimming

21 Ben Venue swimmers were selected to represent the Armidale District at the North West Regional Carnival at the Monckton Aquatic Centre.

Two Ben Venue swimmers were selected in the North West Team to compete at the State Carnival in Sydney in April.

Mitchell Hayden swam in the 11 years Boys 50m Butterfly and Brielle Ball was selected to swim in the 8 years Girls 50m Freestyle.

Other areas

Debating Teams

Ben Venue Public School experienced a highly successful year in the NSW Public Schools Debating Competition in 2012. Ben Venue entered two highly accomplished teams, Ben Venue Blue and Ben Venue Gold in the competition with both teams winning all their local debates and then faced each other in the District Final. Ben Venue Blue won the New England District Final to debate in the Regional Semi-final. Eight Ben Venue students attended the trials for the New England Regional Debating Team to debate at NSW State Debating Championships. Ben Venue was successful in a student winning a place in the New England Regional Team. All the
Ben Venue students are accomplished speakers and were exemplars in their representation of the school at the debating competitions.

**Far Out Science: Science in the Bush**

‘Far Out Science’ is a free program that includes lots of interesting and exciting science activities for children, such as ‘Science in the Bush’ and the ‘Science and Engineering Challenge’. ‘Science in the Bush’ is an annual event held at the University of New England over two days for students in Years 5-9.

Usually, ‘Science in the Bush’ is limited to 20 students per school in Years 5-6. This year however, Ben Venue was offered an additional 20 places due to our success in the ‘Far Out Science’ Logo competition, thanks to Lily Scales, Niamh Evans and Tara Bourke. Activities offered included things such as making slime and hot/cold packs in the chemistry lab, making lip balm and hand cream in pharmacy, monitoring blood pressure and heart rate in the sport science exercise labs, and archaeological, electronics and environmental and rural science activities.

**Premier’s Spelling Bee**

All students in Years 3-6 were given the opportunity to participate in the Premier’s Spelling Bee during 2012. Word lists were integrated into teaching programs and class trials were held to choose three class representatives to be involved in the school final. At the school finals, held in the school hall in front of all stages, two students were selected to represent the school at the Regional Final. Students who participated were presented with a certificate.

**You Can Do It**

‘The You Can Do It Program’ (YCDI) has continued to be a focus in the school. All students participate in regular lessons designed to develop their social and emotional capabilities including Confidence, Persistence, Organisation, Getting Along and Resilience. Over 70 senior students were trained to be YCDI leaders and as part of a very successful YCDI Day they taught mini lessons to a mixed age group of peers. On the YCDI Day, which was designed to highlight the importance of the program within the school, fun outdoor activities and fete stalls were held and parents were invited to be involved in the stalls and a picnic lunch. A rewards program has continued to complement the existing class awards system and all students in the school have collected keys in individual booklets. Key awards and pencils have been presented on a regular basis at school assemblies.

**Academic**

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3 and 5 Literacy and Numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

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

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

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

**Reading – NAPLAN Year 3**

There was a noticeable shift in students from Band 6 towards Band 5. There was also a noticeable increase in students achieving Band 2.
with a corresponding decrease in students achieving band 1.

**Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3**

In 2012 there was a noticeable shift in the percentage of students in Numeracy from Bands 5 and 6 to Band 4 compared to the school average. There was a corresponding shift from Bands 1 and 2 upward to Bands 3 and 4. This is due to the programs designed to move our lower achieving students up. Even though our higher achieving students are achieving greater percentages than the state average a greater emphasis on extending our higher achieving students will result in a better overall school performance.

**Reading – NAPLAN Year 5**

The Reading data indicates that there is a trend towards the centre. This may suggest that our support programs for lower achieving students is effective in moving students to higher bands but this needs to be reciprocated with programs for higher achieving students.

The data on Year 5 Numeracy indicates a desirable trend to higher achievement levels for all students compared to the school average. With no student achieving Band 3 and an above average percentage of students achieving Band 8 the data suggests a steady trend towards higher achievement levels.
Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal Education

During NAIDOC week celebrations, all students took part in activities which recognised the contributions of Indigenous Australians in various fields. Indigenous culture was explored through art, storytelling, songs and drama through the school, with festivities culminating in a special assembly. Dan and Peter Green gave the ‘Welcome to Country’ in Anaiwan language, then led a group of 40 K-6 dancers on didgeridoo, in a ‘Welcome Dance’.

Dan and Peter Green were invited on a number of occasions to perform the ‘Welcome to Country’ in Anaiwan language and didgeridoo performances at a number of public ceremonies including the New England Region Giyanha Dirrabuu Murri Awards held in Armidale.

Multicultural Education

Harmony Day

Harmony Day was celebrated at Ben Venue in Term 1. With over 10% of the school from a language background other than English this made for a very colourful day. The celebration included a special assembly where students dressed in traditional ethnic costumes and a harmony day games afternoon which was enjoyed by all students. Students also dressed in Orange for the day which is the traditional Harmony Day colour.
Korean ConneXion.

The Australia-Korea ConneXion Program is an initiative that is run through the University of New England School of Education with backing from the Federal Government and the NSW Department of Education and Communities. The program aims to develop cultural exchange and awareness between Australian and Korean school students through video conferencing and using digital presentation technologies. By connecting digitally through regular video conferencing sessions, students enhance their attitudes and values not just about a foreign culture, but also their own.

Ben Venue Public School and Chungsol Elementary School in Korea, connect digitally each week, presenting activities to each other on alternative weeks. The aim is to develop cultural exchange while fostering understanding between Australian and Korean students and teachers through video conferencing and online discussions. During the sessions Australian students can see the Korean students and can interact with them. The students have found this program both challenging and very rewarding.

The Australia-Korea ConneXion program focuses on three curriculum areas:

1. Studies of Australian and Korean culture in the Social Studies subject, which, in NSW, is based on Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) Curriculum;
2. Korean language and Korean culture studies for Australian schools that offer Korean language as a second language; and
3. Moral and ethical issues and religion based on the Religious Education Curriculum of the Catholic Schools Office in order to challenge teenagers’ thinking.

Ben Venue students are involved in area one - Studies of Australian and Korean culture and activities based on the key learning areas of both countries.

Studies of both the Australian and Korean cultures have made students more aware of their own cultural and national identities as well as each other’s culture. We have discussed topics such as ‘What makes us Australian/Korean?’ Students have learnt about the different ways that Australian and Koreans think about their customs in doing things and their thinking behind such customs. Exposure to such experiences has helped both Australian and Korean students develop cultural understandings about each other. For the Korean students, the cultural exchange has also provided them with opportunities to develop English language skills.

Before the program starts at the beginning of each year activities in English, Culture, Science, Mathematics and the Arts are programmed. This is done through video conferencing with the teachers involved. The students are taught how to use all the technology and they run the sessions by themselves under the auspices of the teacher.

Each week the students prepare activities in a particular area, produce a power point, gather all the resources needed and then on the day they teach the activity to both the Australian and Korean students. We have time to ask questions and email completed work to each other. It has been a very successful program which has been on great benefit to the students participating.

Progress on 2012 targets

Target 1

Outcome for 2012–2014

To increase writing achievement to equal or better than Reading in NAPLAN years.

Our achievements include:

- A better than expected improvement in Writing compared to Reading in Year 3
- A steady improvement in Writing in Year 5 but still not matching the results in Reading.

From the following graphs it is apparent that the distribution of students across bands in both Writing and Reading in Year 3 shows a much greater percentage of students in Bands 5 and 6 equal to 60% in Writing and 48% in Reading.

In Year 5 student band distributions, Reading still dominates with 34% of students in Bands 7 and 8 whilst in Writing it is 22% of students.
School priority 2

Target 1

Outcome for 2012–2014

Improved attendance rates for all students.

Our achievements include:

- An improvement in the school overall attendance rate to 95% or above.
- A trend towards better attendance over 5 years.
- The school had two teachers attend a school attendance and monitoring course. As a result both teachers have taken on the role of attendance leader.
- Attendance rate for Aboriginal students has improved.
- It was decided not to set up a reward system for attendance as the majority of students were already attending without any issues.

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School evaluation

NSW Public Schools conduct an evaluation to support the effective implementation of the school plan. In 2012 our school carried out evaluation of our School Operated Canteen.

Background

In 2012 at a request from the P&C, the school established a school operated canteen service. This was after a lengthy period where no canteen service was provided. It was decided that a contract basis canteen left little control over menu and student choices in order to maintain profit margins whilst maintaining a healthy canteen service.

It was decided to employ a canteen supervisor who was responsible for the administration of the service. The supervisor was responsible for purchasing and setting of menus as well as coordinating volunteers on a day to day basis to assist with the preparation of lunches and other over the counter sales.

Findings and conclusions

Parents surveyed have been happy with the service provided and have expressed an overwhelming desire to keep the service going.

Two major issues have arisen;

• Administrative Staff - the money counting, banking and payments are processed through the front office using existing administrative time. This has led to an undue burden on front office staff and as a result other tasks have been left needing more time.
• Volunteers - obtaining sufficient volunteers on a regular and ongoing basis has proved difficult.
• Canteen infrastructure - some of the infrastructure of the canteen needs upgrading to account for the increased patronage and the volumes of food needing preparation.

Future directions

Administrative staff

It was decided that:

• Additional time be purchased out of canteen profit to engage additional front office staff in order to maintain pre-canteen task levels.
• Additional time be allocated to the canteen supervisor in order to have enough time to carry out essential tasks. This may be in the form of an additional staff member assisting in the canteen or additional time for the current supervisor.

In terms of Infrastructure the canteen needs:

• Fly screen doors as previously designed to help alleviate the fly problem posed from having wide open windows.
• Seals on the bottom of the canteen serving doors to stop bugs and dust from entering.
• Large double door fridge which would allow only the one fridge to operate instead of two.
• Students artwork to cover canteen doors.

The issue of obtaining and keeping volunteers would be alleviated by having:

• Strategies to assist in enticing more volunteers such as offering the helpers a free treat for their child.
• Plans in place to make a photo recipe book of all the food on the menu so the volunteers have a visual recipe guide to refer to.
• A list of all the previous weeks volunteers in the Ben Venews with a big thank you alongside.
• Publicity demonstrating where the canteen funds are spent in the newsletter to show parents the direct effect that the canteen has on the school’s resources.
• Ensure that the new parents to the school are aware that the canteen is a
school run canteen and that the profit goes back to the school so the time that they volunteer directly benefits the school.

Menu
There were also some suggestions for future direction on the canteen menu in light of the changing clientele of the school. We have an increasingly larger proportion of non English Speaking Background students including Islamic students in the school. Suggestions include:

- Specifically listing the foods on the menu that the canteen sells that comply with Halal standards.
- Have a specials day at the earlier part of the week which is generally the quietest, perhaps once a week or fortnight.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction
In 2012 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.

The school used the Quality of School Life survey over Years 2 to 6 and the results indicated:

- Most students displayed an overall positive view about school life including general satisfaction at school, strong sense of achievement, positive sense of adventure in learning, relevance of schooling and positive student-teacher relationships.
- The majority of students also gave positive ratings in relation to their status, self-esteem and social integration.
- In general, students were more positive about school life
- There were significant differences in the primary years. Male primary students were less positive than females.

This later finding has implications for boys’ education strategies.

Professional learning
During 2013 teachers attended a range of courses. Some of these courses were as a part of the ‘Teacher Professional Learning’. Courses attended included sessions for teachers preparing for the next step in a leadership position. These courses included ‘Preparing a Curriculum Vitae’ and ‘Preparing for Leadership’.

Two teachers were involved in preparing a unit for the new National Curriculum in Science. The unit prepared and developed was linked with the use of chickens in the classroom and sustainable living.

In preparation for the introduction of the English Syllabus a number of teachers attended courses in English including a course ‘Prioritising Grammar’ and a writing course ‘Power of Persuasion’ Our school counsellor attended a workshop ‘Trauma and Family Systems’. Two teachers attended the ‘Swimming Escort Teachers’ course thus enabling them to conduct the Intensive Learn to Swim School later in the year.

Because our choir was selected to perform as a part of the ‘State Festival of Choral Music’ our music teacher was required to attend two workshops, one in Sydney and one in Tamworth.

The English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher attended an ESL Professional Development Course.

A substantial number of staff completed the online course ‘Autism Awareness on Line’ over a number of weeks. This was an essential course for those teachers and executive working on a daily basis with students who present with an autism spectrum disorder.

In addition to recognised external courses the school used Teacher Professional Learning funds to train in-house new and beginning teachers. This included courses in Moderating Student Assessments, the use of the School Based Student Reporting System and Programming for Differentiation in the classroom. In some cases we used funds to release beginning teachers to spend time with an experienced teacher to observe classroom management strategies.

School Development Days were used for such things as mandatory updating in Child Protection, Anaphylaxis, Asthma awareness and developing strategies for use in the You Can Do It Program.
School planning 2012—2014

The School Planning Policy provides direction for the preparation and implementation of school plans including the identification of priority areas, intended outcomes and targets that are consistent with the NSW State Plan and the Department’s Planning Documents.

School priority 1

Outcome for 2012–2014

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

2013 Target to achieve this outcome include:

- Increase the number of Year 5 students achieving the expected growth in reading by 6% to meet the state average by 2014.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Work with staff to identify effective teaching strategies to be implemented in the classroom practice.
- Planned professional development of all staff in the use of these identified strategies.
- Focus on Grammar and Punctuation to raise levels of achievement across the school.
- Focused funding to support teaching strategies for all Aboriginal students.

School priority 2

Outcome for 2012–2014

Increased student Outcomes and levels of achievement in Numeracy for all students.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- Increase the number of students in Year 3 achieving in the top two bands by 6% from 31% in 2012 to 37% in 2014.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Work with whole school staff to identify effective teaching strategies to be implemented in the classroom practice.
- Planned professional development of all staff in the use of these identified strategies including the use of Newman’s Analysis.

School priority 3

Outcome for 2012–2014

High levels of wellbeing for all students.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- Decreased number of negative behavior entries and an increase in positive behavior entries registered on Register of Incidents of Student Contacts (RISC) as measured each term over the year.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Professional learning in the consistent use of RISC by all staff.
- Review the current student welfare policy and procedures by all staff to establish a consistent approach to all aspects of student wellbeing.
- Consistent approach in the use of anti-bullying programs at all levels.
- Focus in Year 5 on programs which counter cyber bullying and in Year 4 on the Bystander Program.
About this report

In preparing this report, the Self-evaluation Committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and Student Learning Outcomes. The Self-evaluation Committee and School Planning Committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

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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:

Senior Marimba group rehearsal on stage

in the Main Concert Hall of Sydney Opera House.