

Watsonia Primary School
4838

**2008 Annual Report to the
School Community**



School Overview

Our Vision

Children at Watsonia Primary School will be supported and challenged in an engaging learning environment, which will inspire pride in their achievements and develop their commitment to become the best that they can be.

Our Values

- Respect
- Commitment
- Pride
- Honesty
- Teamwork

Watsonia Primary School is situated in the quiet residential suburb of Watsonia, sixteen kilometres north-east of Melbourne. The physical environment of the school and its surrounds are spacious, well-developed and attractive. A major upgrade completed in 2002 has provided the school with excellent buildings and physical resources. The school site is shared with Concord Junior School, which operates independently of, but in cooperation with Watsonia Primary School. Greensborough Secondary College, Watsonia North Primary School and St Mary's Parish School are within walking distance of Watsonia Primary School.

Watsonia Primary School has embedded the 16 Habits of Mind which provide a sound philosophy for continuous growth and learning for the whole school community. Our school provides an educational program which focuses on the development of the 'whole' child. Our philosophy is that all children need **SPACE** which stands for **s**ocial, **p**hysical, **a**cademic, **c**reative and **e**motional growth.

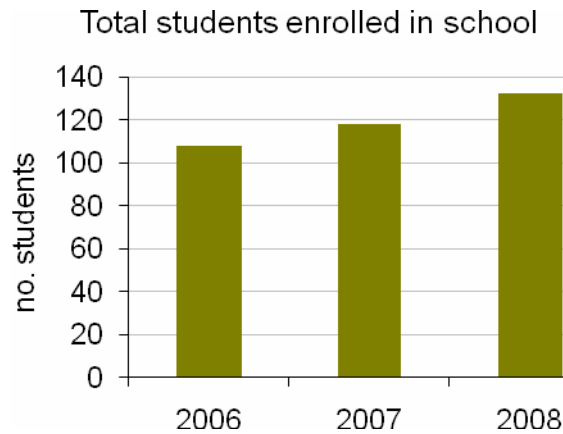
The school has 9 teaching staff and 7 non teaching staff. In 2008 Watsonia Primary School increased from five to six classes and provided specialist programs for LOTE Italian, Library Performing Arts and Visual Arts. Instrumental Music, tennis coaching, and out of hours sporting programs are out sourced. The non teaching staff comprise of Integration Aides, Student Welfare Officer and Business Manager. The school also offers Before and After School Care programs.

Watsonia Primary School serves the local community and is a base for community interaction. Parental involvement is encouraged in all aspects of school life with parents working within classrooms and on a wide range of committees including Education, Marketing, Facilities and Parent and Friends. The School Council at Watsonia Primary School is an active and vibrant body which is committed to ensuring that the education for all children is the best it can be.

Watsonia Primary School has established excellent relationships with local preschools, businesses and community e.g. RSL and the local Library. The school is also an active member of the Banyule Network and ensures coherent and appropriate transition arrangements for our students.

Student enrolments –

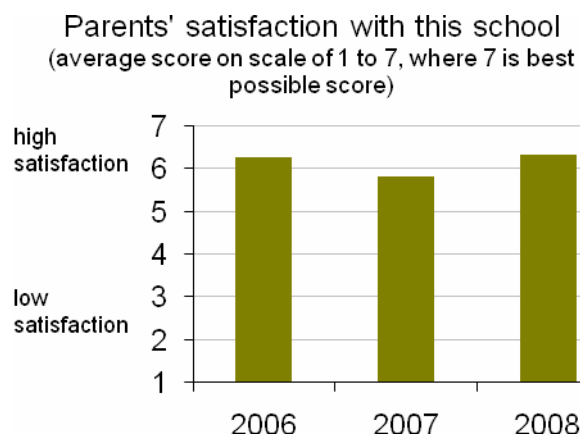
As indicated by the table below the enrolments at Watsonia Primary School have continued to climb steadily over the past three years. The increase in enrolments reflects the community interest and the improvement in the perception of the school in the local community. There has also been a steady growth in enrolments from the local kindergarten which is important to our image as a 'local community' school. The 2009 census figure indicated another strong increase in enrolments.



Parent Satisfaction –

Parent Satisfaction with Watsonia Primary has risen in 2008. This reflects recognition of the changes that took place in 2007 and the fact that the community acknowledged the work of the new staff members and the culture that the school is developing. Parent Satisfaction is above 6 where 7 is the best possible score. This is a very good result for our school and confirms the work of the teachers and leadership.

The school continues to have an 'open door' policy and works with parents to form a true partnership in education. High expectations and a focus on communication have added to this partnership with our students as the focus of all discussions and decisions.



Commonwealth Requirements

- **Teacher Satisfaction -**

The average score for teacher satisfaction (morale) at this school was 91.5 on a scale from 0 to 100 where 100 is the best possible score.

- **Teacher Absence**

The average number of days absent per teacher was 4.50 days where the State Median was 6.40.

- **Teacher Retention –**

Of the 10 teaching staff at Watsonia Primary School at June 2007 (including those on leave without pay), 7 or 70% were still at the school at June 2008. This figure across all Government schools was 84%.

- **Teacher participation in professional learning –**

All teaching staff have participated in professional learning throughout the year. Watsonia Primary School has been fortunate to have the allocation of a Teaching and Learning Coach with a focus on Mathematics and Assessment. Ghiran Byrne has worked with all teachers in the school throughout the year with a major focus in the Grade 5/6, Grade 3/4 and the Prep class.

During the 2008 year our school was accredited as a Performance and Development Culture School. Our professional learning section of this accreditation process included the development of our 'Together We Achieve' program where all teachers take the opportunity to visit each others' classrooms as both an observer and a presenter.

All Graduate Teachers were involved in the Induction and Mentoring program. All staff at the school attended First Aid Level 2 updates and the annual CPR and Epipen training course.

- **Teacher Qualifications –**

All teachers in Victorian Government schools are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. The requirements for registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching can be found at; http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?Document_ID=241.

Principal's Report

Watsonia Primary School continues to grow and develop a strong identity within the local community. The enrolments demonstrate steady growth and there was a need to include another class in 2008. The introduction of 20 laptops into the senior classes has been very successful with students in grades 3 to 6 having regular access to the laptops within the classroom. All classes were provided with interactive whiteboards and the teaching staff attended a series of internal professional learning to support the implementation of this new technology.

Our application for Performance and Development Culture was a reaffirming process as we reviewed and refined our Induction processes and our professional learning. The 'Together We Achieve' peer coaching initiative was further developed by teaching staff and teaching strategies were strengthened by the sharing of professional dialogue and modelling. Our written application was noted as being a strong representation of a Performance and Development Culture.

One of the most important events during 2008 for the entire school community was the 'new school logo'. All members of the learning community were involved in the process and the 'ownership' of the new logo has built further pride and relationships within our community. The explanation of the new logo encapsulates the essence of our learning community:

The Watsonia School logo represents the strength of our community as we work together to protect, nurture and educate our children.

The five values of our school respect, commitment, teamwork, honesty and pride are each represented by a crescent.

The crescents are arranged to illustrate outreaching arms which nurture and support those smaller – similar to a buddy program.

Variations in colour symbolise individuality and the value each individual holds in our whole school community.

The new logo is proudly displayed on our school uniform and the student response to this uniform has been very positive. Student motivation and school connectedness has improved as the student body feels that this logo is 'theirs' and it represents the learning environment that supports and challenges their development.

Watsonia Primary School has made excellent progress over the period of this report, however there are still many areas of improvement and as we strive to improve the student learning outcomes, our students, teachers and parents will continue to work together to build a strong partnership which will benefit our children.

Jeanette Martin
Principal

School Council President's Report

Late in 2008 the Watsonia Primary School production *Lights, Camera and Arnold Schwarzenegger*, written by the school's Arts Teacher, drew a strong and appreciative crowd to a large theatre venue in South Morang. The production neatly capped a year of growth and success for the school under the highly effective leadership of its Principal Jeanette Martin. It served to highlight the school's supportive and inclusive culture by bringing every student and teacher onto the stage, where they absolutely shone.

Other high points of the year, described elsewhere in this report, include significant improvements to school infrastructure with the completion of the new toilet block and rainwater tanks, and also to information and communication technology with the introduction of wireless laptops in the senior school and interactive whiteboards in every classroom. In student learning, extension programmes in maths, health and physical education, computers, Italian, poetry and an online science quest ensured that students achieving above requisite standards continued to be challenged and encouraged. The focus on mathematics was emphasized by the Family Maths Night, which filled three classrooms to capacity with noisy, engaged children, parents and siblings.

We look forward to the 2009 school review to help us address the challenges outlined in this report in regard to aspects of student learning and school attendance. My thanks to School Council, to Jeanette Martin and the school staff, and to our students, parents, families and the wider community for all that you contribute to the work, growth, health and life of our school.

Megan Pictor
School Council President

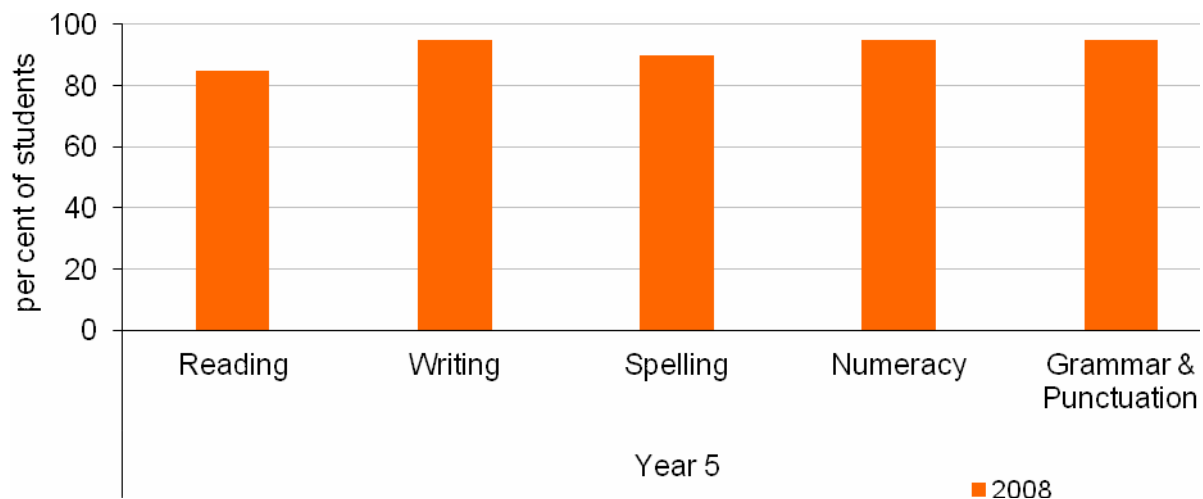
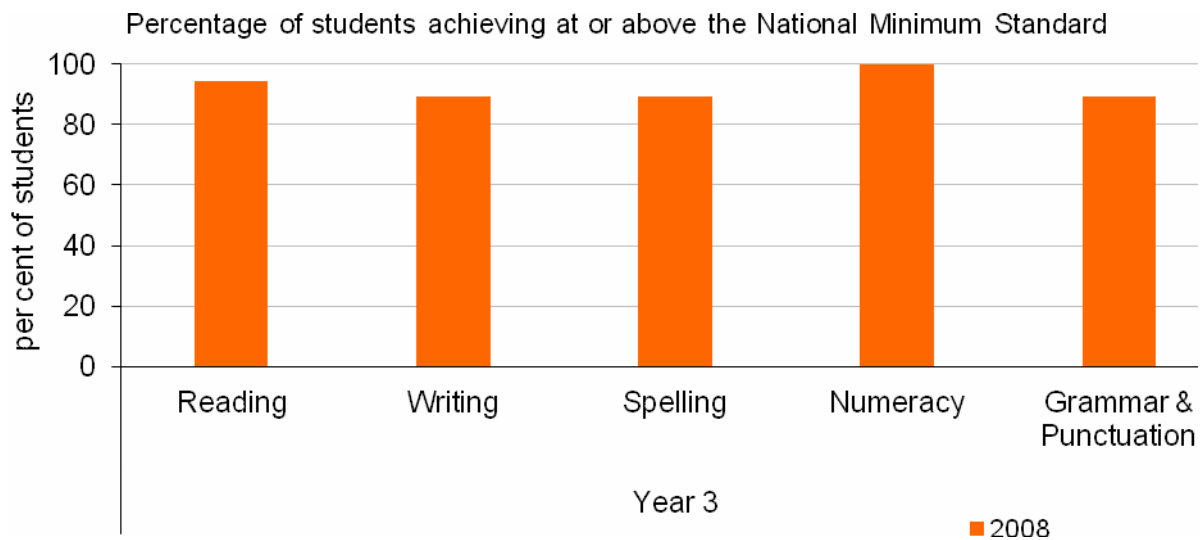
Student Progress & Achievements

Student Learning

During 2008 Watsonia Primary School continued with a focus on the development of mathematical thinking across the school. The involvement of a Teaching and Learning Coach from the Regional Office and a strong commitment from teaching staff to improving student outcomes and engagement has developed a whole school approach based on the use of Assessment FOR Learning. Teachers are using data collected from online testing, NAPLAN and Early Years Numeracy Interview for planning programs in 2009. This approach was developed and consolidated throughout the 2008 school year.

The 2008 Annual Implementation Plan goal for Student Learning states *'Our aim is that, Watsonia Primary School students enjoy all aspects of maths and think mathematically when the opportunity arises. They not only answer given questions but can formulate their own theories and check them through a variety of mathematical strategies. Their progress is monitored through testing and moderating using the VELS progression points as a reference point.'*

Percentage of students achieving at or above the National Minimum Standards –



NAPLAN Numeracy results for Year 3 indicated 100% of students were achieving at or above the National Minimum Standard. In Year 5, 96% of students were achieving at or above the National Minimum Standard. These results demonstrate an excellent improvement on the 2007 results. Although these are very good results there are still areas for improvement that have been identified by staff and these are being addressed by using assessment data and moderation to improve teaching approaches and student outcomes.

Throughout the year selected teachers worked with the teaching and learning coach from Regional Office in a 'train the trainer' model. Teaching and learning strategies throughout the school were strengthened through this approach.

Online On Demand testing in Number has been used throughout 2008 to monitor student progress in Years 4 – 6. This data was used to plan appropriate programs and provide detailed reports for parents. It was also used in the transition between year levels.

Mathematical thinking is highlighted each week with a "Maths Puzzler" challenge which is presented at assembly for all community members to 'have-a-go'. This enables our families to share thinking challenges and work as a team to solve the problem.

A Family Maths Night was held in Term 4. This evening was well attended and both students and parents were involved in hands-on, interactive activities.

The focused two-hour literacy block in all classrooms has supported Literacy learning across the school. As is noted in the graphs on the previous page, 90% of Year 3 students achieved at or above the National Minimum Standard in Reading, Writing, Spelling and Grammar and Punctuation. In Year 5, in Grammar and Punctuation and Writing 96% of the students, in Spelling 90% and Reading 85% of the students achieved at or above the National Minimum Standard.

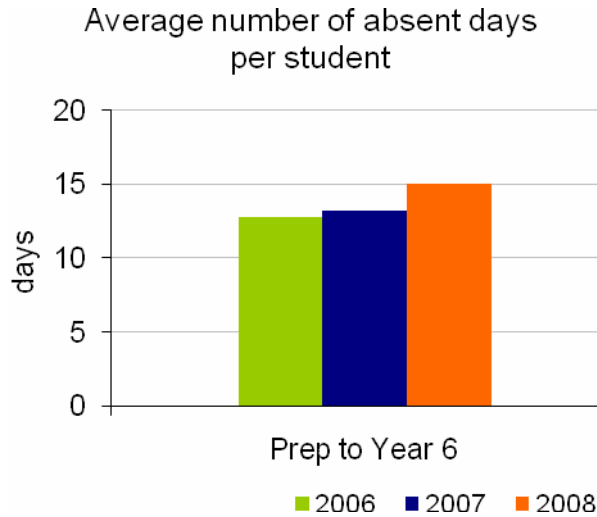
The overall results in Literacy are affected by small numbers of students and the percentage calculations used, however the trend data and the Teacher Judgement against VELs in the School Level Report also identify some areas for improvement particularly in years 1, 4 and 5. The focus for the coming year will be to have smaller classes in the Grades 3 and 4 for the 2009 school year and additional support in the Grade 5/6 area.

Literacy support has continued in the Junior School with the employment of a teacher to provide specific targeted language sessions. Students participating in these sessions are from the Prep to 2 classrooms. The December 2008 benchmarking demonstrated an increase in student outcomes which can be attributed to this extra support.

The school has also extended the use of technology during 2008 to include laptop computers and interactive whiteboards. This technology is enabling students to use a range of multimedia to access information and this will be further extended in 2009 to enhance learning programs from Prep to 6.

Student Engagement and Wellbeing

Average number of absent days per student –

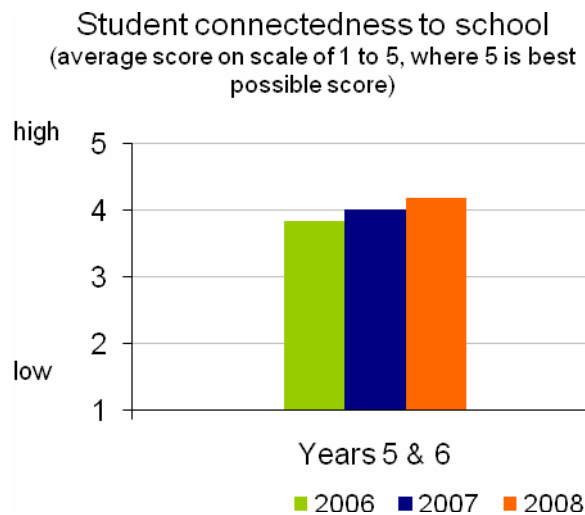


The average number of days absent per student has risen slightly over the past year. This is another area where small numbers can affect the way in which data is presented graphically. Within our school community we have a small number of families who take overseas holidays for extended periods of time and this in turn this does add to the average figure.

The graph above does not show the number of students who are now attending school more regularly and the decrease in number of students who are absent from school on a regular basis. In Year 2 there has been a decrease by 1 day, year 3 a decrease by 3 days and year 4 a decrease by 2.4 days. This highlights the fact that there are some areas of the school where particular students' absences have distorted figures.

In the 2008 school year Watsonia Primary School implemented an initiative with a full time Primary Welfare Officer. This initiative has enabled the school to make contact with all families regarding a range of issues one of which is absenteeism. Some of the issues faced by our students relate to: parent ill health, family issues, family holidays, etc. All absentees are contacted and parental consent is obtained.

Students' school connectedness –



The graph on the previous page shows student opinion on their connectedness to school in the senior classes. The steady increase in student opinion is pleasing as we work together to build a strong culture and a safe, supportive, challenging learning environment. The whole learning community has worked together to build a 'pride' in our school and our presentation.

The school uniform is worn with pride and during the 2008 year the School Council Marketing Committee worked through the process of changing the school logo. All members of the learning community were asked to provide feedback on the various logos and eventually the new logo which demonstrates our community was selected by an overwhelming majority. Our student body were heavily involved in this process and thus feel they have ownership of their new identity.

The 16 Habits of Mind have become the focus for all learners within our learning community and all students use the Habits of Mind to reflect on their learning experiences and explore the future possibilities. The Habits of Mind have also encouraged a 'student voice' as the student body has the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions.

The Watsonia Primary School students represent our school in many ways in the local community and they are also heavily involved in representation at sporting events. This also encourages connectedness to school as the students work together to achieve success in all aspects of their school life as part of Watsonia Primary School.

Student leadership is highly valued by both students and teachers. In 2008 the School Captains, Student Activities Managers, Junior School Council Representatives and Library Monitors all took a role across the whole school in leadership responsibilities for the whole year. Within the classrooms students had the opportunity to take on leadership roles as Class Captains, Recycling Officers and Environmental Officers for a term.

Student Pathways and Transitions

The school has had a focus in the Strategic Plan and the Annual Implementation Plan on improving student transition from external sources and also within the school. In 2007 we trialled an end of year procedure to enhance student transition to the new class for the following year which provided a whole day transition program for the new class to work with the new teacher.

On reflection the whole day was too long so in 2008 the time was reduced to a half day transition program. This appeared to be much more beneficial and enabled both students and teachers to begin to establish relationships. This program was extended to include all new teachers as well and thus we worked closely with other schools to enable teacher release for the time required at the end of the year. Student feedback on the 'transition' day was very positive and decreased their concerns about the coming year.

The transition process was also enhanced in 2008 with the introduction of a specified meeting time where teachers 'handed over' information and results about all students they had taught in the year to the 'new teacher'. This process was built into the end of year planning day and assisted teachers with the planning of the first few weeks of the new year.

The Prep transition program has been enhanced and documentation is systematically communicated to parents in a range of ways to ensure that they are aware of the dates and times. The result in 2008 was 100% attendance at the Orientation days and all Preps and parents ready to begin 2009 comfortable with their school surroundings. The invitation to the local kindergarten teacher was also accepted and she visited the school in the 2009 year to 'see' her students from the previous year.

The staff from Watsonia Primary School also attended the local kindergarten in 2008 to hear a presentation about the teaching and learning strategies used in the kindergarten context. This presentation allowed the teachers time

to reflect and discuss the links between school and kindergarten and further developed the relationship with the local kindergarten.

The Parent Opinion survey regarding Transition shows an increase in the school mean with a score of 6.13 out of a total score of 7. This is above the state mean which is 5.79. As Transition is an area that we have focussed on it is pleasing to note the Parent acknowledgment.

The Transition process for 'new' students to our school throughout the school year has been further developed and the 'Welcome Package' is individually presented to each student by the Primary Welfare Officer, introductions at assemblies and in class are an important part of this process.

Watsonia Primary School has continued to maintain excellent relationships with the local secondary colleges and our Grade 6 students all attend the relevant Orientation days at the secondary college of their choice. The main colleges our Grade 6 students move onto are Greensborough College, Bundoora Secondary College, Macleod College and this year one student to Loyola College.

Future Directions

Watsonia Primary School has reached the end of the four year Strategic Plan. The coming year, 2009, will be a year of School Review. This School Review will involve a School Self Evaluation, a visit from an external Reviewer and a formal review report to Leadership, School Council and Staff.

A School Review provides all members of the learning community with the opportunity to provide feedback and to reflect on the progress made during the four year period. This is also an excellent opportunity to reflect on areas for improvement and the pathways forward to ensure that our students are provided with outstanding learning opportunities which support the improvement of student learning outcomes.

Our school has had a major focus on English and Mathematics over the past four years. There have been gains made in both areas, however there is still more work to be done. The external standardised testing using National Benchmarks (NAPLAN) show that most of our students have met the minimum targets in English and all students have met the minimum targets in Mathematics.

The focus must be on improvement and thus we will be working towards improving student achievement to meet or exceed state averages. There are challenges for the school with some of the backgrounds from which the students come. These challenges are being addressed through communication with parents and the development of programs and partnerships to support these students.

In 2008 the school implemented a comprehensive range of 'extension programs' to provide students with a challenging learning activity in their area of competence. These groups were very successful and all students made outstanding progress. This type of focus must continue and be extended where all students who are above the expected standard are provided with a challenging learning environment.

The 2009 focus on Assessment FOR Learning will enable teachers to analyse data and review teaching programs to teach all students at the level of need whether this be above or below the expected level. A whole school approach to analysis of data and more individualised programming is a proposed aim for the new Strategic Plan.

Student Engagement and Well Being continues to be a strong program within the school. The Primary Welfare Officer will take a leading role in 2009 as we work with families to decrease absenteeism. Student attendance has improved in most areas of the school over the past year. It is noted that there are some 'extended absences' which affect the results in other areas. Once again communication and a strong partnership between school and home will make a difference in this area.

Physical resources and facilities will continue to be improved throughout the coming year. There are building plans for a new music facility and the purchase of another 40 laptop computers will enable us to provide all students with regular access to computers within their classrooms at all times of the school day.

The School Council for 2009 has a strong presence in the school with the parent representatives taking a role in the collection and collation of data towards the School Review. The School Council Sub-Committees are also operating well with Councillors focusing on school improvement in all committees. A focus on the increased involvement of parents in a range of school activities is an aim for the current School Council.

Financial Performance and Position

Watsonia Primary School has continued to maintain a strong financial position with careful planning for indicative enrolments and staffing procedures. The School Council Finance Committee regularly reviews figures and puts forward initiatives based on sound financial procedures.

During the 2008 school year the School Council authorised funds to go towards extending Interactive Whiteboards into all classrooms and the purchase of 20 wireless laptops to be used in the senior classes. The refurbishment of the toilet block was also supported with school funds to enable all sections to be completed.

The inclusion of another class in 2008 required new furniture and resources to ensure that the classroom was fully equipped. These initiatives were supported by School Council funding and planning.

Both Commonwealth and State funding was used to complete a total refurbishment of the student toilet block. The funding to support the purchase and installation of water tanks and water efficient toilet cisterns and tapware has added an extra dimension to the learning programs which focus on environmental protection. The student body and the local community have noted regular communications about the decrease in water consumption due to usage of rain water from the tanks.

Funds raised by the Parents and Friends group were allocated to providing an air conditioner in the Art room and the provision of display boards in the new classroom and along passageways. These display boards have provided another avenue for students to display their work and promote their learning to each other and the community.

The teaching staff has been supported in professional learning with funding to provide replacement teachers and time to implement transition programs. The annual allocated budgets have also supported teacher development and assisted to provide time for teachers to work on assessments which will directly impact on student outcomes.

The School Council has considered the financial position of the school during 2008 and ratified the decision to maintain the current investment with the interest remaining to slowly build a strong financial base. A review of the financial situation in the later part of 2008 also provided School Council with information which allowed a decision to fund locally the building of a new music room to be completed in the 2009 school year. The plans and engineering drawings for this structure have been completed however work cannot begin until the current Building the Educational Revolution funding has been decided and allocated. Hopefully we will have the music facility by the end of the year.

At the end of the 2008 year the Finance Committee moved that 40 more laptop computers be purchased for the beginning of the new school year. This was supported unanimously by School Council due to the success of the laptop program in 2008. These new computers were purchased ready for imaging in February 2009. There are now 40 laptops in the Grades 3 – 6 and 20 for use in the Prep to 2.

Financial Performance – Operating Statement Summary for the year ending 31st December, 2008	
Revenue	2008 Actual
DE&T Grants	154,152.00
Commonwealth Government Grants	91,730.00
State Government Grants	91.00
Other	57,030.00
Locally Raised Funds	137,367.00
Total Operating Revenue	440,370.00
Expenditure	
Salaries and Allowances	134,583.00
Bank Charges	707.00
Consumables	15,420.00
Books and Publications	1,568.00
Communication Costs	6,736.00
Furniture and Equipment	54,522.00
Utilities	19,888.00
Property Services	198,573.00
Travel and Subsistence	0
Motor Vehicle Expenses	0
Administration	4,353.00
Health and Personal Development	115.00
Professional Development	4,668.00
Trading and Fundraising	49,750.00
Support/Service	3,067.00
Miscellaneous	20,805.00
Total Operating Expenditure	514,756.00
Net Operating Surplus/- Deficit	-74,386.00
Capital Expenditure	2,585
Please note that the above amounts do not include any credit revenue or expenditure allocated or spent by the school through its Student Resource Package	

Financial Position as at 31st December, 2008	
Funds Available	2008 Actual
High Yield Investment Account	330,994.48
Official Account	2,615.83
Other Bank Accounts(listed individually)	111,287.07
(insert)	
(insert)	
Total Funds Available	444,897.38
Financial Commitments	2008 Actual
School Operating Reserve	60,891.42
Co-operative Bank Account	0
Assets or Equipment Replacement < 12 months	52,000.00
Revenue Received in Advance	0
Building/Grounds including SMS < 12 months	128,500.00
Region /Clusters Funds/School Based Programs < 12 months	0
Provision Accounts < 12 months	6,000.00
Repayable to DEECD	0
Other Recurrent Expenditure (Accounts Payable)	136,505.96
Assets or Equipment Replacement > 12 months	31,000.00
Building/Grounds including SMS > 12 months	10,000.00
Region /Clusters Funds/School Based Programs > 12 months	0
Provision Accounts > 12 months	20,000.00
Co-operative loan >12 months	0
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	0
Total Financial Commitments	444,897.38

School Contact Information

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This report contains summary data extracted from the School Level Report. If you would like to access the School Level Report, please contact Jeanette Martin on 9435 2917.