2009 Annual School Report
Casuarina School

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way
Messages

Principal's message

Casuarina School is a Department of Education and Training (DET) School for Specific Purpose (SSP), category 5 school. We are situated within the Nirimba Education Precinct of the Blacktown School Education Area, Western Sydney Region.

Like all public schools, our core business is the delivery of quality education to improve outcomes for all students.

In 2009 our commitment to continual evaluation and improvement, on-going staff professional learning, consultative and collaborative practices and the effective professional partnerships developed with all key stakeholders ensured 2009 was a highly successful year.

I am very pleased with, and proud of, the achievements of the school over the past twelve months and look forward to the challenges and successes the 2010 school year will bring.

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.

Kylee Thorson

School context

Casuarina School is a 5 day program offering student's personalised access to the curriculum whilst learning the skills, strategies, knowledge and values they require to become better equipped to meet the expectations of a school setting.

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

Casuarina School student enrolments are limited to twenty-eight at any time. Students maintain an enrolment in a mainstream school setting throughout placement. This shared enrolment status supports the reintegration focus of a student's placement which is generally one of the placement goals for all our students.

The following table shows our new student enrolments over the past five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student attendance profile

Casuarina School students are required to attend school full-time. Attendance throughout a student’s placement can vary according to individual need and according to students' Transition and Integration plans which are developed as required and in negotiation with all key stakeholders.

Student attendance is monitored closely and appropriate records of attendance maintained. As enrolments are shared with the students’ mainstream schools, attendance information is communicated between settings.

Management of non-attendance

If a student is absent from school without prior approval, the student's parent/carer is contacted by telephone and a reason for the absence is sought.

If a student’s non-attendance becomes a pattern and we are unable to support the student to attend school as required, the student is referred to the DET’s Home School Liaison Program for further support and follow-up.

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.

Casuarina School has 4 classes which are limited to 7 students each. The classes are supported by a Classroom Teacher and a School Learning Support Officer (SLSO).

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>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher RFF</td>
<td>0.336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Part-time</td>
<td>0.168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>0.168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Advisor</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Release</td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>5.176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the information available at the time of this report Casuarina School does not have an Indigenous person on staff.

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>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our school is extremely fortunate to have a highly experienced and dedicated teaching and support staff.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary:</th>
<th>30/11/2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>129,420.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>66,158.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>19,987.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>2,900.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>4,434.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>615.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>504.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>94,602.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expenditure
Teaching & learning
- Key learning areas: 22,509.47
- Excursions: 0.00
- Extracurricular dissections: 4,547.41
Library: 852.41
Training & development: 6,631.14
Tied funds: 21,386.89
Casual relief teachers: 7,030.26
Administration & office: 30,933.18
School-operated canteen: 1,185.40
Utilities: 16,735.16
Maintenance: 15,714.75
Trust accounts: 615.00
Capital programs: 16,998.00
Total expenditure: 145,139.87
Balance carried forward: 78,882.84

A full copy of the school's 2009 financial statement and further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2009

Achievements

Arts
Visual and Creative Arts forms part of Casuarina School's well-rounded and balanced curriculum. During 2009 students were provided opportunities to demonstrate their interests, skills and talents in this area.

Sport
Sport provides a structured, safe environment for students to develop their gross motor skills, build confidence and physical fitness and provide valuable teaching and learning opportunities for students learn to participate co-operatively in competitive and non-competitive situations and as individuals and as members of a team. Our school sport program encourages students to value an active and healthy lifestyle.

Throughout 2009 students participated in a variety of sporting activities involving all students. Activities included hand-ball, basketball, cricket, soccer and touch-football.

Academic
All Casuarina School students in scholastic years 5 and 7 are registered to participate in the National Assessment Program (NAP). Students participating in a mainstream school re-integration program and are attending the integration setting 3 or more days each week are registered through the mainstream school.

In 2009 the number of students who were registered to participate in the NAP through Casuarina School was as follows:

Year 5 - 1 student
Year 7 - 5 students

As Casuarina School's performance results for 2009 were based on a very small number of students the school's performance data cannot be reported for privacy reasons.

Significant programs and initiatives
Casuarina School continues to deliver quality programs for our students. Some of these include:

Aboriginal education
We continue to develop programs based on the main focus areas of the Aboriginal Education policy; to educate all students about Aboriginal history, culture and contemporary Aboriginal Australia, and to improve the learning outcomes for all Aboriginal students.
All students learn about the factors that contribute to an Aboriginal persons’ identity, the changing nature of the Aboriginal culture and the importance of families and communities to Aboriginal people and participated in creative arts’ activities using a variety of techniques traditionally used by Aboriginal people.

Our enrolment process was revised to include the development of Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) for all Aboriginal students. The PLPs were developed collaboratively with the student’s parents/carers and provided valuable information for teachers to develop relevant and engaging individual education programs aimed at improving learning outcomes for all Aboriginal students.

**Multicultural education**

Casuarina School promotes harmony, understanding, and the celebration of differences and commonalities among cultures.

Throughout 2009 all staff participated in a range of professional learning activities aimed at developing their awareness and understanding of the differing cultural needs of our students and on effectively incorporating multicultural perspectives into all teaching and learning activities.

**Respect and responsibility**

Casuarina School promotes the NSW DET and the NSW Government's core rules and the values that represent the aspirations and beliefs of the Australian community as a whole, including integrity, excellence, respect, responsibility, cooperation, participation, care, fairness and democracy.

The teaching and learning of values permeates every aspect of school life at Casuarina as we continuously strive to develop positive interpersonal relationships which promote respect and responsibility.

**Other programs**

**Mainstream school re-integration**

For most students, re-integration to a mainstream school setting is a goal of placement. Generally, students who do not integrate to a mainstream school setting post Casuarina, are transitioned to a more appropriate educational setting.

Of those students exiting Casuarina during the 2009 school year, 66% integrated to a mainstream school setting, 7% transitioned to a support class within a mainstream school, 7% transitioned to a school-to-work program and 20% transitioned to a more appropriate alternative special school setting.

**Literacy and Numeracy**

Student’s literacy and numeracy skill levels are assessed soon after enrolment. Assessment at this time provides base-line data on which individual student progress and achievement is measured and ensures students’ educational plans build on what they already know.

Assessment outcomes informed whole school teaching and learning programs and Students’ Individual Education Plans. Individual student progress toward improvement and achievement was closely monitored through the on-going collection and analysis of learning data.

Students undergo a final assessment of their basic literacy and numeracy skills prior to exiting the program. This assessment provides an indication of the impact our literacy and numeracy programs have had on the students’ skill levels.

The impact our literacy and numeracy programs had on the basic literacy and numeracy skill levels of those students exiting the program during the 2009 school year was significant.

Assessment data collected from students exiting the Casuarina program during 2009 indicated that from time of placement to the time the students exited:

- Reading and spelling skills improved by an average of 13 months;
- Reading age levels increased by an average of 17 months;
- Spelling age levels increased by an average of 10 months;
- Basic numeracy skill levels improved by an average of 38 months;
- Computational skill levels in each of the four operations improved on average as follows: Addition - 38 months, Subtraction - 5 months, Multiplication - 4 months, Division - 3 months.

**Social Communication and interaction**

Assertive communication and appropriate social interaction skills and strategies are taught by explicit instruction and by participating in the school’s behaviour management and positive behaviour reinforcement systems. Students acquire a deep understanding of what assertive communication looks and sounds like and are able to use the ‘communication scale’ as a point of reference when reflecting on their communication with staff and peers.
Participation in these programs provides students the opportunity to develop an improved awareness of the range and value of emotions and to learn an ‘emotional language’. This language empowers students with the ability to talk about and reflect on their emotions and on situations in which their emotions were expressed in ways that led to negative consequences. Students then develop strategies to better manage their emotions in ways that lead to more positive consequences.

Analysis of behavioural data collected throughout 2009 indicated students’ social communication and interaction knowledge, skills and strategies increased and self-control and resilience levels improved. Student progress and achievements were recognised, rewarded and celebrated.

**Progress on 2009 targets**

**Target 1**  
*Improve student learning outcomes, specifically in the area of basic literacy and numeracy skills*

Our achievements include:
- 90% of students working toward/beyond age/stage appropriate syllabus outcomes;
- 100% of students’ school based assessment results indicating improved overall literacy skills;
- 100% of students’ school based assessment results indicating improved overall numeracy skills;
- A whole school program developed collaboratively and implemented by all teaching staff.

**Target 2**  
*Improve the integration and transition outcomes for all students.*

Our achievements include:
- Implementation of a middle school model of curriculum planning and programming;
- All year 6 students participating in a structured and negotiated year 6 to year 7 transition program;
- A 3% improvement on the percentage of students returning to a mainstream school post Casuarina.

**Target 3**  
*Improve student behaviour and level of self-control and improved school/parent/carer relationships.*

Our achievements include:
- Improved student attendance;
- Student suspension data showing a 15% decrease in the number of days lost due to time out of the program or suspension from school.

**Target 4**  
*Placement outcomes of Aboriginal students match or better non-Aboriginal students’ outcomes*

Our achievements include:
- Average improvement in spelling skill levels of Aboriginal students bettered non-Aboriginal students;
- Average improvement in overall numeracy, multiplication and division skill levels of Aboriginal students bettered non-Aboriginal students;
- Integration outcomes of Aboriginal students matched non-Aboriginal students.

**Target 5**  
*Improve the level of engagement in learning demonstrated by all students.*

Our achievements include:
- All students accessing and utilising Information Communication Technologies;
- Student engagement in learning levels moved from variable to broad levels of engagement;
- Student behaviour data showed a 20% decrease in Work It Outs for classroom off-task behaviour.

**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 2009 our school carried out evaluations of School Leadership and Curriculum Access - Programming.

**Educational and management practice**

*School Leadership*

**Background**

To be successful at our core business and achieve our mission, now and in the future, it is vital that our vision is a powerful one. In 2009 we evaluated the school’s vision statement and began the process of developing a new, more powerful statement, i.e. one which is detailed, positive, inspiring and shared by all.

**Findings and conclusions**

This process has been a long and challenging one. Our school serves an extended area
encompassing the whole of Western Sydney Region, and, our students, parents/carers and wider school community members change regularly.

Future directions
We will continue to work collaboratively with our extended school community and finalise the school’s new vision statement early in the 2010 school year.

Curriculum
Access - Programming

Background
Stage 3 teaching staff have been implementing the DET COGs model of programming areas all areas of the curriculum except English, Mathematics and PDHPE although each of these areas are incorporated in to the COGs units. Extensive consultation and research was undertaken to determine whether we could extend the model to include Stage 4 outcomes as this would ensure a continuum of learning across stages, allow classes to be structured according to social dynamics rather than curriculum and allow a whole school middle school model to be implemented.

Findings and conclusions
Consultation and research findings indicated it was possible to extend Stage 3 COGs programs to include Stage 4 outcomes but it would be a great deal of work.

The benefits for students of a whole school program outweighed the amount of work required to achieve a whole school program.

Future directions
We will continue to implement the model and make further improvements by incorporating activities catering for students’ preferred learning styles and evaluate the programs using the Quality Teaching Framework.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction
In 2009 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.

Their responses are presented below.

All parents/carers, students and teachers were strongly supportive of the improvements in the area of student welfare.

Parents/carers commented on our student’s enthusiasm to attend school and their improved attitude toward learning.

Teachers acknowledged the dedication and professionalism of their colleagues.

Most students, parents/carers and teachers agreed that the curriculum was relevant and that students progressed and achieved.

Professional learning
Throughout 2009 staff demonstrated an on-going commitment to professional learning through participation in school-based and non school-based professional learning activities.

Professional learning included:
- Keep Them Safe (Child Protection);
- DET’s Quality Teaching Framework;
- Programming using COGs;
- First Aid and Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) courses presented by the Royal Life Saving Authority;
- The NSW Primary Principals’ Network Conference;
- The Special Education Leaders’ Conference;
- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCI);
- Professional Assault Response Training (PART);
- Count Me In Too;
- Positive Behaviour for Learning;
- GA Workshop (Bunnings);
- How Girl’s Learn;
- SASS Information Day;
- NSW SASSPA Conference;
- Managing Challenging Behaviour;
- School Administration Manager Annual Conference;
- SMART software IT In-service;
- Narrative Therapy;
- NSW SASSPA IT Seminar;
- Restorative Justice;
- OHS Emergency Management Training.

Sharing of staff learning, skills and knowledge enhanced the quality of teaching, learning and school administrative programs and ensured all staff contributed to the learning of their colleagues.

School development 2009 – 2011
The 2009 school year was a busy and successful one with many of the strategies to achieve the longer-term goals outlined in the school’s three year plan implemented. The plan will be updated in early 2010 with a focus on the implementation of The Stages of Learning Strategy paper ‘Our Middle Years Learners’ and the ‘NSW Quality Teaching Model’. Recommendations from the Western Sydney Region’s Review of ED/BD Services conducted during 2008 impacted on our programs and services in 2009.
Targets for 2010
As outlined in the school’s 2009 – 2011 Strategic Improvement Plan, the following five areas have been targeted for improvement over the next couple of years.
1. Literacy and numeracy
2. Integration and transition
3. Student engagement & well-being
4. Aboriginal education
5. Teacher quality

Target 1
Deliver quality learning and teaching programs to improve student learning outcomes in all KLAs with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy
Strategies to achieve this target include:
PLPs developed for all students;
All students with continued access to ICT;
Continued student participation in the National Assessment Program;
On-going staff professional learning.
Our success will be measured by:
Students’ school based assessment results indicating progressively higher Reading Age levels;
Students’ school based assessment results indicating progressively improved Computational Skill levels;
Any gap between the students’ individual NAPLAN performance results and the state average reduced;
Students’ programs include age/stage appropriate syllabus outcomes.

Target 2
Improve student placement and transition outcomes
Strategies to achieve this target include:
On-going implementation of the recommendation from the regional review of student support services, i.e. school’s model of operation remains as a five (5) day program;
Maintain strong relationship with DET Transition & OOHC support staff;
On-going liaison with mainstream school staff to ensure students are included in transition 6-7 programs & develop Individual Transition Plans for all students in collaboration with all key stakeholders;
Develop Individual Integration Plans for all students in collaboration with all key stakeholders & ensure effective communication strategies;
Develop program placement protocols for integration;
Continue to build on networks with mainstream school executive and teaching staff.
Our success will be measured by:
Year 6 students participating in a structured and supported transition to high school program;
Number of students integrating successfully to a mainstream school setting increasing.

Target 3
Improve student behaviour and level of self-control and improved student/parent/carer relationships
Strategies to achieve this target include:
Continue implementation of Behaviour Tool and Casuarina Point System;
Continue to provide parents/carers with frequent positive feedback;
Provide relevant and engaging teaching and learning opportunities by incorporating ICT in to teaching and learning programs;
Expand Living Skills program to include garden / agriculture plot;
Continue to work collaboratively with key stakeholders.
Our success will be measured by:
Improved student attendance data;
Increased student on-task behaviours;
Students participate in physical activity at least half an hour each day.

Target 4
No gap between placement outcomes for Aboriginal students and all students
Strategies to achieve this target include:
Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) developed collaboratively with parents/carers at time of placement and regularly reviewed;
Provide all Aboriginal students with access to a range of quality education programs that incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in all areas.
Involve local community Aboriginal elders in school events and recognise and celebrate
culturally significant events with the Aboriginal community;

Implement strategies from the up-dated Aboriginal Education and Training Plan;

Seek guidance from regional Aboriginal Education Officers and Wesley Mission staff.

Our success will be measured by:

Placement outcomes of Aboriginal students match or better non-Aboriginal students.

Target 5

**Improve student engagement in learning levels and ICT incorporated effectively into teaching and learning programs**

Strategies to achieve this target include:

Students with access to computer based learning opportunities;

Students provided with on-line learning activities;

On-going implementation of Living Skills program;

Professional learning for staff on Quality Teaching strategies;

Provide opportunities for staff to develop relevant networks and participate in meetings.

Our success will be measured by:

All staff engaged in professional learning opportunities according to school and individual need;

All teachers effectively incorporate ICT in to students' programs;

All students' demonstrate increased engagement in learning levels.

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.

Kylee Thorson Principal

Ian Hancock Assistant Principal

Helene Bartley School Administrative Manager

Louise Mulligan Classroom Teacher

Tricia Young Community Representative

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School contact information

Casuarina School

PO Box 60

Cnr Garfield Rd East & Piccadilly St

Riverstone NSW 2765

Ph: 9838 1200

Fax: 9627 4773

Email: casuarina-s.school@det.nsw.ed.au

Web: http://www.casuarina-s.schools.nsw.edu.au

School Code: 5574

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: