2008 Annual School Report
Alma Public school

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way
Our school at a glance

Students

Students at Alma Public School learn in a safe and happy environment with clear expectations and challenges. Students are provided with every opportunity to achieve at their full potential. Teachers encourage students to be risk takers in their learning and not to fear mistakes in their learning.

The school runs a number of programs to support students’ special needs. These include such programs as the Support Teacher Learning Assistance (STLA), Regional STLA, Itinerant Support Teacher Behaviour (ISTB), Reading Recovery (RR), Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO) and In Class Tutors. Each of these resources are used to target and support children’s specific needs through a variety of delivery modes such as one to one, small groups, in class integration and withdrawal.

We aim to educate the support the development of the whole individual ensuring the physical, academic and emotional wellbeing whilst also reflecting the local community attitudes and values.

Our students benefit from a range of opportunities outside the traditional classroom and in-school offerings such as PSSA sport, Public Speaking, Debating, Choir, Dance as well as a variety of University of New South Wales competitions across a range of Key Learning Areas (KLAs). Each Alma PS student has enjoyed the opportunity to participate in such a broad range of activities. These activities are seen to have a very positive effect on the students’ individual development and allow them to take their rightful place as future leaders and productive citizens ready to contribute to our community.

Staff

In 2008, Alma maintained a wonderful balance of youth and experience in teaching staff. The school had a minimal turnover of staff with only the Principal being a new arrival to the school.

The school gained two Rural Area Relief teachers provided by DET to overcome the shortage of casuals available in the Broken Hill district.

With minimal change over of staff teachers remained focussed and committed to the provision of quality teaching and learning activities aimed at challenging and engaging students.

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

Significant programs and initiatives

The school has continued to implement programs and initiatives to provide further support for students with particular needs. Some of these include;

Jolly Phonics

A literacy strategy aimed at developing a range of literacy skills in K-2 students. Jolly Phonics focuses on sounds, blends, digraphs and then progresses into grammar for Yr 2 students. Jolly Phonics is implemented in all K-2 classrooms.

In Class Tutors

Department of Education Science and Training (Federal) provides funds for Aboriginal tutors to be employed to provide in-class support for K-2 students. This funding provided support for four days per week in 2008.

Department of Education and Training (State) provides funding for the In Class Tutors which provides extra support for Stage 2 and 3 classes. This funding is based on 2007 BST results. In 2008 this funding provided support for four days per week 2hrs per day.

Both of these initiatives are a great support in focusing on our efforts to improve student outcomes in literacy.

Parent Workshops

Throughout 2008 a number of workshops aimed at increasing the level of parent involvement and participation.

These included;
- PSFP parents fun day
- Reading Workshop
- Interactive whiteboard training

The response to these workshops was not what the school had expected. However, it was decided that we would continue to pursue these again in 2009 as there was some response and the feedback from parents who attended was very positive.

PSFP-Parent Fun Day
Reading 2 Learn

In 2008 Alma PS had 2 teachers training in the Reading 2 Learn program. The program is aimed at improving students’ outcomes in literacy through focusing on improving the quality of teaching and supporting students throughout the learning process. R2L utilises best practice strategies that have been proven to be successful in studies conducted over a number of years in the Northern Territory.

The school is committed to continuing training staff in Reading 2 Learn as a way of extending R2L strategies into all classrooms K-6.

Where R2L has been implemented over a period of time, results in literacy have been shown to improve.

Student achievement in 2008

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3

In 2008, 43 Yr 3 students sat the NAPLAN in Literacy.

Our students achieved results across the full range of bands 1-6 in Reading, Writing, Spelling and Grammar and Punctuation.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3

In 2008, 41 Yr 3 students sat the NAPLAN in Numeracy.

Our students achieved results across the full range of bands 1-6 in Numeracy. When compared to the state, our students were over represented in bands 1 and 2 and under represented in bands 5 and 6.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5

In 2008, 45 Yr 5 students sat the NAPLAN in Literacy.

Our students achieved results across the full range of bands 3-8 in Reading, Spelling and Grammar and Punctuation. In Writing, our students achieved results in the range of bands 3-6. Writing is a cause for concern for the school as no Yr 5 students achieved either band 7 or 8.

In all aspects of literacy, our students over represented in bands 3 and 4 and under represented in bands 7 and 8.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5

In 2008, 46 Yr 5 students sat the NAPLAN in Numeracy.

Our students achieved results in the range of bands 3-7 in Numeracy.

Messages

Principal's message

As the only new arrival on staff, 2008 proved an interesting year for me.

One of the things that stood out immediately for me was the fact that the Alma School Community is steeped in tradition. Also there is the unwavering loyalty of families who see the school as the focus of the community. The fact that a school of our size is able to run the canteen for 5 days per week with volunteers speaks volumes for the level of commitment of a large number of mothers, fathers and grandparents who regularly volunteer in our canteen to provide an important service to our students.

As a result, Alma Public School has a strong commitment to the students in its care. There is a strong emphasis on all areas of students’ development i.e. academic, social and physical. Our aim is to improve all students’ literacy and numeracy skills in a supportive and caring environment where risk taking is encouraged and fostered.

Our school is situated in the close knit South community among well-maintained grounds and buildings. The school is fortunate enough to have ample space allowing the implementation of a variety of academic, sport, environmental and healthcare programs to be implemented by our team of enthusiastic and committed teachers and professionals from other community agencies.

Students are encouraged through a system of levels, positive reinforcement, rewards and explicit teaching to demonstrate positive social values including, honesty, courtesy, responsibility and respect. Their achievements in all areas are regularly recognised and celebrated by peers, teachers and parents through the weekly newsletter and assemblies.

Parents take every opportunity to attend special events where students’ achievements are recognised. This is particularly evident with consistently good attendance at the award assemblies. The school fosters this attendance through notification to parents of children receiving awards prior to the assembly.

NAIDOC day and the concert are two events that also receive very high attendance. The school would like to maintain this involvement and see it extend into classroom support and involvement at an organisational level in the form of committees and participation in parent forums.
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.

Larry Micevski

P&C and/or School Council message

The P&C had another successful year of fundraising in 2008. Whilst the group remained largely unchanged and still a relatively small core group attended the monthly meetings, there were a couple of new faces at the meetings and quite a few new faces helping out at events such as the Concert.

In 2008 the P&C ran their selection of successful fundraisers which included a range of raffles, discos, Mothers and Fathers Day stalls as well as catering for the various carnivals.

This year, the school identified a shortage of home readers as an issue and the P&C readily contributed approximately $3000 for the purchase of a new set of home readers.

The P&C continues to purchase and supply free of charge the Alma sun smart school hats to all students upon their first enrolment at the school.

In 2008 the P&C were successful in discovering a parent contact to a reliable uniform supplier which proved to be very competitive in pricing and quality of uniforms especially the girls’ winter slacks. We are sure that this will continue to benefit families in the form of cheaper high quality uniforms for years to come.

We continue to work in a close knit partnership with the school in supporting initiatives through the injection of funds to further our children’s education. We hope to build on this year’s successes and see even more new faces in 2009. Our children reap the benefits of our involvement and we would like to encourage even more parents to join us in 2009.

Bill Graham
P&C President

Student representative’s message

The Student Representative Council was made up of elected class representatives and were supervised in our fundraising activities and organisation by Mr Gisen.

Our aim this year was to select which charities we would support so that we could focus our efforts and make worthwhile donations.

We held regular meetings to decide on what fundraising activities to hold and organise these at times when they wouldn’t clash with something else being organised.

The SRC held mufti, pyjama and crazy hair days to name just a few events in 2008. Participation and support for these events usually involved a gold coin donation.

We also had a special visit by Hill FM and we promoted stress down day and the radio station did the breakfast broadcast from the school grounds.

We had a hard working group in 2008 and we were very successful in raising money for our chosen charities.

Lauren Jeffries Yr 6 SRC

School context

Student information

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

Student enrolment profile

Our student enrolment in 2008 at the time of reporting was a total of 291 with 144 male students and 147 female students enrolled.

The high rate of transience in the Alma school population has continued throughout the year, although it is interesting to note that we ended the 2008 school year with a total enrolment of 306
students. Whilst we had a number of families leaving town and relocating, it seemed that more families were arriving into Broken Hill and enrolments grew to 306 by the end of the year.

An announcement in November 2008 that Perilya were to slash 440 jobs from their mining operations in Broken Hill has certainly changed the outlook for 2009 in Broken Hill.

A loss of 440 mining jobs certainly does not bode well for the 2009 enrolments, especially as supporting industries start to feel the flow on effect of the job losses.

Whilst numbers have demonstrated a slow steady decline historically, there is an added concern as to how the enrolments will change for 2009.

Student attendance profile

The student attendance has decreased slightly from 90.9% in 2007 to 90.3% in 2008.

While we are not happy with even this slight decrease, last year saw an unusually high number of absences throughout the winter with colds and flu. This trend continued on into term 4 with highly contagious diseases such as chicken pox and measles contributing to quite high rates of absence.

It is encouraging that an increasing number of our absences are being explained and we hope that 2008 won’t be repeated next year in terms of contagious diseases.

Class sizes

In March 2003 the Government announced its commitment to publish primary class sizes in annual school reports in order to provide parents with as much local information as possible.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll Class</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total per Year</th>
<th>Total in Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KH</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1S</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4D</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4D</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4G</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4G</td>
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<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4K</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6C</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6C</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6D</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-6G</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-6G</td>
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<td>5-6R</td>
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<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-1K</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structure of classes

In 2008 the structure of classes based on Stage groups for years 3-6 with 3 Stage 2 classes and 4 Stage 3 classes.

The K-2 classes were based on year groups with the exception of K-1K which was a composite formed to accommodate the slightly larger kindergarten enrolments. All K-2 classes were in line with the DET class size policy.
Staff information
It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

2008 provided a little instability with staffing when 2 of our long-term temporary engagement teachers were offered permanency one in Term1 and another in Term2. The classes affected (a S3 and a Kindergarten) did cope quite well with the change, although if possible we would have liked to avoid it.

Following parent advice and recommendations it is hoped that we can avoid future mid-stream changes to a cohort in their first year in Primary school.

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>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal Behaviour</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool Teacher</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Reading Recovery</td>
<td>0.315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Schools Funding Program</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary District Guidance Officer</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18.615</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staff retention
Of the nineteen staff members at Alma PS in 2008 seventeen were retained from 2007.

The two new staff members were the newly appointed principal and the Rural Area Relief (RAR) teacher appointed to the school in Term1. The school then received a second RAR teacher part way through Term 2.

One temporary engagement teacher left at the end of Term 1 to take up a permanent appointment and a second temporary teacher left at the end of Term 2 also to take up a permanent appointment.

Staff attendance
Staff have access to leave entitlements such as sick leave. In 2008 the average daily attendance rate for staff, as determined by the Department, was 95.6%

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

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>$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30/11/2008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Income
- Balance brought forward: 366,308.61
- Global funds: 191,964.67
- Tied funds: 129,382.07
- School & community sources: 86,301.81
- Interest: 22,514.40
- Trust receipts: 7,490.00
- Canteen: 0.00

Total income: 803,961.56

Expenditure
- Teaching & learning
  - Key learning areas: 5,447.04
  - Excursions: 30,121.66
  - Extracurricular dissections: 101,458.79
- Library: 2,132.81
- Training & development: 5,699.68
- Tied funds: 217,045.82
- Casual relief teachers: 35,933.31
- Administration & office: 64,033.16
- School-operated canteen: 0.00
- Utilities: 57,190.26
- Maintenance: 19,762.96
- Trust accounts: 12,438.03
- Capital programs: 0.00

Total expenditure: 551,263.52

Balance carried forward: 252,698.04

Whilst the carried forward figures for 2007 and 2008 show a decrease of just over $100,000.00 this is due to the completion of the Investing In Our Schools program in 2008.

This project, whilst awaiting completion was responsible for about $100K sitting in the schools bank account and at the completion the project went a little over the quoted price due to price increases which was basically responsible for the decrease in the carried forward figure.

With this project being completed, the school is now very well placed for any improvements in technology that may be rolled out by DET over the next few years.

A full copy of the school's 2008 financial statement is tabled at the annual general
meetings of the School Council and/or the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

**School performance 2008**

**Achievements**

**Arts**

Students at Alma Public school were given a number of opportunities to experience various aspects of the arts throughout the 2008 school year.

Our choirs rehearsed throughout the year for various events notably, the Choral festival, the Term 3 concert and Christmas Carols on Patton St.

Operation Art is a popular event for visual art and Alma had two successful entrants in 2008 and their artworks currently adorn the foyer at the front office.

The School Concert is another popular arts event and class groups prepare items based on a theme. The theme for 2008 was “In The Jungle”. Despite bad weather and one postponement, the 2008 Concert was a huge success.

**Sport**

Sport is a favourite activity with many of our students and in 2008 like most years, there was a wide range of activities to choose from.

The school had PSSA teams for Cricket, AFL, basketball, soccer and netball.

School sports included AFL and NRL skills clinics, lawn bowls, Austag and a range of ball sports alternating on a weekly basis.

The school also participated in the Paul Kelly and Spring Cups in AFL and Rugby League gala days.

Alma PS students had a very successful year with a number of students representing the school by gaining selection in the Barrier teams in athletics, AFL, cricket, basketball, soccer, netball swimming and cross country.

Not only is sport an important part of the curriculum, but it also provides another avenue for developing not only specific sports skills but also the very important leadership and social skills.

**UNSW Competitions**

Each year our students are given the opportunity to participate in the University of NSW academic competitions across various KLA's.

The most popular among the students tend to be the competitions in the English, Science and Mathematics KLA's.

2008 has proved to be a successful year for Alma students, as they achieved a Distinction and three Credit certificates.

**Excursions**

During 2008 Alma students participated in a number of school excursions that enhanced and supported the curriculum.

- Stage 3 students visited Canberra and the Snowy Mountains on a three day trip.
- Stage 2 visited Mildura on 2 day excursion.
- Year 2 had an overnight stay at Silverton Courthouse.
- Year 1 had a sleepover at the school.

These excursions were well supported as demonstrated by the number of students who attended and parent feedback. Parents of the Stage 1 students said they would like to see these overnight events be come a part of an annual routine as a way of preparing students for the longer excursions to come in the primary years.

**Academic**

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10. The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in the assessments.

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

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

**Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3**

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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)

**Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3**
With the changeover to NAPLAN for the 2008 testing, it is difficult to draw direct connections between 2007 BST results and 2008 NAPLAN results.

However, we will attempt an analysis in terms of the bands achieved. Of the 43 Yr 3 students who sat the 2008 NAPLAN for reading 25.6% achieved band 1. In comparison, 30% of Yr 3 students achieved band 1 in 2007.

This represents a reduction in the number of students achieving in band 1. Whilst we are staring to move in the right direction, we still have a considerable way to go in improving literacy outcomes for students at Alma Public School.

**Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3**

Of the 41 students who sat the NAPLAN for numeracy 26.8% achieved band 1. Students achieved results across the full band range from 1-6. There has been an increase in the number of students achieving bands 4 & 6, but the challenge for the school is to increase that number.

**Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5**

Whilst it is difficult to draw a direct comparison of results achieved under BST and NAPLAN, we’d like to see more of our Yr5 students achieving the higher bands.

Our Yr5 students continue to achieve growth rates well above the regional and state averages, but we are still seeing an overrepresentation in the lowest two bands.

This continues to be a concern for the school and as a result, literacy continues to be a major focus for 2009.

**Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5**

Of the 46 Yr5 students who sat the NAPLAN for numeracy, 65% achieved bands 3 and 4. Whilst these are not bands 1 and 2, the big difference in NAPLAN is that these now represent the bottom two bands achievable in the Yr5 tests.

It is also important to note that our Yr5 students’ average progress between Yr3 and Yr5 was very close to that of the state and a little higher than our like school group (LSG).

Our challenge for 2009 and beyond is to have the majority of our Yr5 students achieving at and above band 5.

Whilst over 26% of our students achieved band 5 in 2008, our concern is that less than 9% achieved at band 6 and above.
Minimum standards
The Commonwealth Government sets minimum standards for reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, spelling and numeracy for years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

The performance of the students in our school in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy is compared to these minimum standards. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these standards are reported below.

Percentage of Year 3 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 3 students achieving at and above minimum standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of Year 5 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 5 students achieving at and above minimum standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education
In 2008 Alma PS had approximately 22% Aboriginal student enrolment. Alma is in the fortunate position of having four Aboriginal teachers on staff and two Aboriginal Education Officers (AEOs) to support Aboriginal students.

Aboriginal perspectives were included across KLAs such as English, Creative and Practical Arts and in Human Society In Its Environment (HSIE) through the newly developed COGS units.

NAIDOC Week was again celebrated with a day of special cultural activities. In 2008 we were fortunate enough to have one of our behaviour teachers (an Aboriginal woman from the Nunawal people), do a brief presentation on Sorry Day and what it meant to many Aboriginal people. This was really well received not only by the students but by all those in attendance. One comment on the day was an expression of shame on how little this grand parent knew about our own Aboriginal history.

Multicultural education
Multicultural perspectives were taught in the English, HSIE and the Creative and Practical Arts KLAs.

The school has a staff member who has been duly elected by staff and holds current training to take on the role of Ant – Racism Contact Officer (ARCO).

The ARCO attended a P&C meeting to inform them of the role. Information posters were displayed around the school and articles published in the newsletter.

Respect and responsibility
In 2008 the focus on respect and responsibility continued through the continual reinforcement of the values of honesty, respect, responsibility, safety and the willingness to be an active listener and learner.

These values are continually revisited in the form of a school creed at all school assemblies.

In 2008 the Circus Fun program was implemented and it taught students a number of skills as well as the above listed values.

Other programs

Circus
In 2008 the school in conjunction with the Itinerant Support Teacher Behaviour (ISTB) implemented this program to teach circus skills to students who needed extra support with learning social skills. This program proved successful in its first year of implementation as it involves the use of positive peer role models to model desired behaviours.

Progress on 2008 targets

Target 1

Literacy-to reduce by 10% the number of Yr3 students achieving band 1 and 2 in BST

In 2007 a total of 52% of Yr3 students achieved band 1 and 2. In 2008 the number of Yr3 students achieving band 1 and 2 was 41.5%. Whilst this percentage is still quite high it is moving in the right direction.
Our achievements include:
- The reduction represents a 20% drop in the number of Yr3 students achieving band 1 and 2
- Parent involved in the Fun Day workshop targeted the maths packs as a focus for 2009

Target 2

Literacy to increase by 10% the number of Yr5 students achieving band 5 and 6 in BST

The direct comparison of Yr 5 results has been very difficult to accomplish as the band structure has changed to a continuum from Stage 2 to Stage 5. The bands for Yr 5 achievement now begin at band 3 and go to band 8.

Our achievements include:
- Yr5 students continue to achieve growth rates that are well above the state average
- Students achieved results between band 3 and 8 in three aspects of literacy
- 4.4% of students achieved band 8 in spelling and grammar and punctuation

Target 3

Numeracy to reduce the number of students achieving band 1 and 2 by 10% in BST

Our achievements include:
- A reduction of 30% in the number of Yr3 students achieving band 1 and 2
- An increase from 8% of students achieving band 4 in 2007 to 14.6% in 2008

Target 4

Student welfare and discipline to reduce the number of playground incidents of teasing and bullying

Our successes include:
- A reduction of over 20% in the number of playground incidents
- A total of 3 short suspensions for the 2008 school year
- Over 70% of all students achieved Silver and gold level certificates

Key evaluations

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2008 our school carried out evaluations of professional environment and Aboriginal education and perspectives.

Educational and management practice

Professional Environment

Background

In 2008 Alma Public school evaluated the professional environment as part of our evaluation by inviting a program review after consultation and discussion with the School Education Director and the approval of the Regional Director.

The program review was conducted on 24-28 November 2008, by a team of four, comprising three Broken Hill Schools Office (BHSHO) staff and a Principal from Dubbo. The review team conducted interviews with the principal, teachers, parents, students and School Administrative Support Staff in individual, small groups and forums.

The terms of reference for the review were:
- Structures and systems in place
- Leadership and expectations
- Planning and communication

Findings and conclusions

A number of recommendations based on staff, student and parent responses were made across the three terms of reference and included:
- Determine priorities for action in the short and long term
- Involve community through parent forums
- Use values forums for students to outline their expectations of school
- Undertake research and review of TARS process
- Monitor the process of supervision on regular basis
- Schedule and publish meetings for each term
- Determine meeting requirements based on school plan priorities
- The principal monitor the meeting regime through attendance and collection of records
- All staff develop role statements that show their contribution to the school community
- The principal monitor the process

Future directions

The review process was a very informative one and staff, students and parents were very willing to participate in the interview process.

The School will:
- Work through the recommendations at executive and whole staff meetings with the support of BHSHO consultants
- Develop and implement the consultation process with staff, parents and students at relevant planning opportunities
• Maintain regular channels of communication with community regarding school events
• Provide training opportunities for parents to support their children’s learning

Curriculum

Aboriginal Education

Background

Alma Public School has among the highest Aboriginal enrolment among the Broken Hill School at around 22%. We also are fortunate enough to have 4 Aboriginal teachers and 2 aboriginal Education Officers (AEOs), one at Budglie Preschool and one at the school working across K-6.

The school carried this evaluation through a collegial review conducted by Dare To Lead. The review team of 2 was in the school for 3 days conducting interviews with staff, students and parents.

Findings and conclusions

The review found that while the school was doing many things well in regard to Aboriginal perspectives, there were some areas in need of focus. These included:
• Specific knowledge about who are the traditional custodians of the land on which Alma PS is built
• The formation of an Aboriginal Advisory Committee to participate in the decision making process about Aboriginal issues in the school
• Teach about Acknowledgement of Country and make it a part of all school events
• Teach about the history of the Aboriginal Nations and Language groups impacting on the Aboriginal history of Broken Hill

Future directions

The school will throughout the 2009 school year take on board and work through the above list of recommendations. The first step will be to invite community members to join the Aboriginal Advisory Committee ensuring that all sections of the Aboriginal community are represented.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2008 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.

Their responses are presented below.

The overall responses about parent, student and staff satisfaction were gleaned from the two reviews conducted late in 2008.

Parents, staff and students were overall happy with being members of the Alma school community. There were a number of suggestions for improvement of the overall operation of the school and these were included in the recommendations made by both reviews and are a focus for the school for 2009.

Professional learning

The Teacher Professional Learning funds in 2008 were expended on a range of professional learning activities driven by area of focus in the school plan and activities nominated by teachers throughout the year.

The various learning activities were from a range of areas in varying degrees and included:
• Beginning teachers
• Literacy and Numeracy
• Career development
• Syllabus implementation
• Welfare and equity
• Use of ICT for teaching and learning.

School development 2009 – 2011

Targets for 2009

Whilst there has been improvement in the 2007 targets, literacy and numeracy will again be a focus for us in 2009.

Target 1

*Literacy - Increased levels of achievement in Reading and Writing for all K-6 students.*

Strategies to achieve this target include:
• Analyse data to inform planning of T/L activities in literacy
• Continue Jolly Phonics strategies in K-2 classrooms
• Literacy On Track – implement in K-2 classrooms for 2009 and provide professional learning for all k-6 staff
• Professional learning focused on raising reading levels
• Resident author to work with students and teachers in writing

Our success will be measured by:
• Reduction of the number of students achieving the bottom two bands of NAPLAN in both Yr 3 and Yr 5
• Improved quality of T/L activities in all literacy classrooms
• Students engaging with T/L activities leading to higher RR levels in K-2 and closing the gap between school and regional levels of achievement
Target 2

Numeracy – Increase the levels of numeracy achievement for all students K-6

Strategies to achieve this target include:
- Analyse data to inform planning of T/L activities in numeracy
- Regular assessment of students work to monitor progress
- Participation in MCEETYA pilot (number focus) 2009-2010
- Planning to address areas of identified need

Our success will be measured by:
- A continued reduction in the number of Yr3 students achieving band 1 and 2
- 80% of Yr 3 students achieving bands 3 to 6 by 2011
- 80% of Yr 5 students achieving bands 6 to 8 by 2011

Target 3

Connected Learning - Improve student engagement and achievement in K-6 through extensive use of digital technology across all KLAs

Our strategies to achieve this target include:
- Install Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs) in remaining 6 classrooms
- Professional learning focus on use of IWBs
- Support current strategies in various KLAs with appropriate software programs e.g. Mathletics K-6
- Staff share expertise at staff meetings on a regular basis

Our success will be measured by:
- Improved achievement of outcomes for all students
- Fewer classroom management issues due to increased student engagement
- Improved attendance due to increased student engagement
- Increased teacher confidence evidence by an increased use of digital technology across all KLAs in all classrooms

Target 4

Aboriginal Education – Increased Aboriginal parent engagement in supporting their child’s learning

Our strategies to achieve this target include:
- Form Aboriginal Advisory Committee covering all sections of Alma PS Aboriginal community
- Commence implementation of Personalised Learning Plans for Aboriginal student in ES1 and S1
- Develop and enhance partnerships with Aboriginal families by keeping them well informed through home visits and interviews

Our success will be measured by:
- Aboriginal Advisory Committee guides the school decision making process about Aboriginal Education
- Aboriginal parents not threatened by the school as evidenced by an increase in the number of parents visiting the school
- Aboriginal student achievements are as good or better than other students by 2011

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: