2009 Annual School Report
Verona School
Courage to Change

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way

Verona School
Courage to change
Our school at a glance

Students
Verona School supports 21 students from school Years Five to Eight who are experiencing difficulty in managing their behaviour in a mainstream school. The school provides explicit, systemic quality learning programmes to assist students in meeting both their learning and social outcomes.

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

Significant programs and initiatives
In 2009, Verona School successfully implemented a number of programs that enabled students to not only reach many of their learning and social outcomes but also make a successful transition back to their home schools.

Significant programs and initiatives included:
- Establishment of a frog pond.
- Improved ICT facilities such as three interactive whiteboards.
- A universal driveway for the easy access of special transport.
- Construction of two outdoor areas.
- Introduction of curriculum and reward (levels) excursions.

Student achievement in 2009
During 2009, 16 students made the transition back to their home school after the 40 week intervention program conducted at Verona School.

Messages

Principal's message
Verona School provides a forty week intervention program for students experiencing behavioural difficulties in their home school. The school offers proactive programs and outstanding facilities to assist students in improving both their learning and social outcomes.

The 2009 year at Verona School bears witness to an improvement in student attendance and a reduction in the suspension rate. These results can only be a reflection of the outstanding academic and welfare programs currently taking place at the school.

The many successes achieved at the school this year centred around the establishment of the frog pond. The building of the pond allowed students to learn the value of collaboration to achieve a goal. It also provided them with numerous learning opportunities such as environmental studies.

The school also introduced both curriculum and rewards excursions this year with great success. Students had the opportunity to build on their academic and social outcomes by attending excursions that focused not only on their learning but rewarded them for displaying positive behaviour. These excursions included trips to Cronulla Beach and the Sydney Aquarium.

Many of the achievements gained this year would not have been possible without the support of teachers, parents, guardians and community members.

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.

Robert Patruno
Principal

School context

Student information
Verona school has a maximum of 21 students that supports students from years 5 to 8. The school conducts a 40 week intervention program that assists in improving their learning outcomes. Students at Verona attend 4 days a week and attend their home school on the fifth day. This enables the students to remain in contact with their school and gradually integrate back into their home school.

In 2009 the student population of the school include:
- Male 78%
- Female 22%
- Aboriginal 32%
- NESB 32%

The population of the school community can vary during the year due to the short term nature of the program. Approximately 65% of the students students reintegrate back to their home school, 25% of the students complete their education at an alternative setting such as TAFE and the remaining 10% of students seek workplace opportunities.
Student enrolment profile
Student enrolments increased from 33% of capacity at the beginning of 2009 to 86% by the end of the year.

Student attendance profile
Attendance statistics at Verona School improved in 2009. The annual average attendance was 78%. This was a 10% increase on 2008.
A high percentage of absences were justified with phone contact from home or a note.
A number of students required special transport provided by the NSW Department of Education and Training. A majority of students travelled independently by public transport. A high percentage of students also accessed support agencies within the wider community.

Management of non-attendance
Non-attendance was managed by the Assistant Principal making immediate contact with a student’s family after absence was recorded at morning roll call.
This allowed the school to not only make instant contact with the home in regard to attendance, but also resolve any attendance issues.

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 2009 class size audit conducted on Wednesday 18 March 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Student Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>Seven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Seven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Seven</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structure of classes
Verona caters for a maximum of 7 students per class with a teacher and SLSO. The school has three mixed ability classes.

Staff information
The staff at Verona are highly professional in establishing outstanding educational programmes and opportunities for their students. The school consists of a Principal, Assistant Principal, three teachers, four support staff and a counsellor. Each member contributes an important role in both improving and supporting outcomes for all students.

<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>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLSO</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff (SASS)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The National Education Agreement requires schools to report on Indigenous composition of their workforce.
Enter a statement describing the Indigenous composition of the school workforce. Principals are strongly advised to refer to the Support Document for further information.

Staff establishment
In 2009, the substantive position at the school increased by 60%. The increase in permanency provided the opportunity to maintain the consistency of both structures and policies within the school. Thus, allowing parents, guardians, students and the wider community to develop greater collaboration with the school community.

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>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial summary
This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.
Date of financial summary: 30/12/2010

Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>177 587.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>43 046.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>16 630.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>288.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>6 164.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td><strong>243 718.28</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
<td>8 328.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>302.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
<td>1 004.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>94.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
<td>370.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>32 920.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
<td>20 635.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>5 863.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>8 964.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>5 400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>83 884.52</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Balance carried forward: 159 833.76

Students were also able to access the expertise of a visiting Aboriginal artist who specialised in Aboriginal animal totems. They learned about the Aboriginal names for different native Australian animals and their specific meanings as totems. Under his guidance, the students chose a native animal and painted a representation of that animal in Aboriginal style. The group worked cooperatively to create a mural for the school grounds.

A student from Verona was selected to participate in a workshop called Artlinks that focused on children's identity; recognising and respecting cultural background. The artworks created from this workshop symbolised aspects of their culture and represented them in art form. This culminated in this student’s work being exhibited at the Fairfield art gallery.

**School performance 2009**

The school achieved all its schools goals for 2009. This in turn allowed the school the opportunity to provide the best possible learning and social opportunities for students.

**Academic**

**Achievements**

**Arts**

Throughout 2009 students enjoyed participating in a variety of art works developing a range of skills. As the themes related to other curriculum areas students were able to experience making their own Japanese masks when learning about Japan.

A full copy of the school's 2009 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.

The school purchased a variety of new sporting equipment due to the Premiers Sporting Challenge Grant. Students participated in a number of sports including:

- Table Tennis
- Soccer
- Touch Football
- Basketball
- European Handball

The sports program provided students with the opportunity to develop new skills, knowledge and the ability to work as part of a team.

**Student Teachers**

Two student teachers from Sydney Catholic University completed their teaching experience at Verona School. Both the school community and student teachers benefited from the experience.

After feedback from the student teachers, the University are keen to continue their relationship with the school.

**Progress in literacy and numeracy**

Engagement in both literacy and numeracy activities increased last year due to the implementation of the interactive whiteboards. The whiteboards provided the opportunity to modify literacy and numeracy activities to not only cater for the needs of students but also engage students in the learning process.

The introduction of timetabled literacy and numeracy lessons every morning has allowed
students to improve their basic skills and gain an increased self esteem and confidence in these two areas, as they have achieved set outcomes.

**Significant programs and initiatives**

The establishment of the frog pond was one of the main academic and student welfare projects for 2009. The building of the pond assisted students in successfully achieving a number of learning and social outcomes. The project was directly linked to both Science and HSIE lessons and assisted students in learning skills such as working as part of a team, following instructions and setting short and long term goals. The skills achieved during the project will support the learning of students in the future.

The frog pond was a highlight in the achievements for the Verona students. This was a major project that began in Term 2 with students studying the lifecycles and habitats of frogs. They researched information and also attended an excursion to the frog and reptile show where they were able to speak to experts in the fields. Here they accessed knowledge and learnt about the rules and regulations for keeping frogs. This helped them when designing the pond as they were able to reproduce the conditions necessary to recreate a natural environment for frogs.

The students worked hard over the next term building the pond, overcoming many problems encountered along the way. Through this learning activity our students gained many practical skills such as, calculating the correct amount of materials needed for the pond and how a pond is constructed. They learnt to work together as a team and to persevere with a task until it was complete. They also felt a great sense of accomplishment.

The students finished off the project by landscaping the surrounding area of the pond and planting trees to provide shelter for the area in the future. A solar powered fountain and filter was added creating atmosphere and healthier water for our frogs. This area has become a feature within the school grounds and a place where the students can have quiet reflection.

**Aboriginal education**

As a part of our Aboriginal Education for 2009 we were able to create a project that was connected to our Frog Pond. We were able to give our Frog Pond an Aboriginal name thanks to the assistance given by one of our Aboriginal families. The name given to the pond was ‘Boogoo Doogada’, meaning place of frogs. The students used a wood burning technique to etch the name onto the sign.

We need to thank the family for the time spent in working with the students to then make a sign displaying the name. The sign is placed at the back of the pond and has both the Aboriginal name and the English translation. This project featured in our Frog Pond Opening Ceremony.

**Multicultural education**

Verona School is a culturally diverse community with high percentage of the school coming from a Non English Speaking Background. Teachers and students learn to value the various cultural groups within the school.

To celebrate this diversity the students participated in our program of International Foods. The recipes chosen represented the different countries that the students were studying in their HSIE unit. The students’ favourite was learning to make sushi.

**Respect and responsibility**

The values of respect and responsibility were actively embedded into the school community. This was achieved using explicit teaching, consistent staff reinforcement through direct instructions and rewarding positive behaviour.

Students were consistently reminded of the importance of these values in achieving both their outcomes within all aspects of the school and wider community.

**Other programs**

**Building Education Revolution**

The Federal Government’s Building Education Revolution greatly contributed to improving facilities. BER provided funding for a new kitchen, two covered outside learning areas and the universal driveway.

These new additions provided the school with the opportunity to run outdoor lessons and implement a special transport drop off and pick up zone. Therefore, improving the learning environment for all members of the school community.

**Progress on 2009 targets**

**Target 1**

100% of students achieved improved outcomes in literacy based on school assessment records. Our achievements included:
- 100% of students who participated and completed the program improving their
Literacy outcomes based on classroom assessments.

- Inclusion of Literacy programs significant to the students’ interests.
- Continued development of ICT within the Literacy programs.
- Increase in engagement in learning due to the decrease in inappropriate behaviours.

**Target 2**

100% of students achieved improved outcomes in numeracy based on school assessment records. Our achievements included:

- 100% of students who participated and completed the program improving in their numeracy outcomes based on school assessment records.
- Implementing practical applications of numeracy increasing the significance and relevance of learning for our students.
- Tracking of students’ understanding through data collection, highlighting areas of concern and focusing on these areas.
- Increase in attendance reflecting an increase in the students’ numeracy outcomes.

**Target 3**

Student attendance to be sustained at or over 90%

Our achievements included:

- Monitoring and following up on absenteeism
- Strengthening links for sharing information on attendance between Mainstream setting and Verona
- Establishing of a student reward system that focused on students’ positive behaviour
- Introducing of rewards (levels) based excursion.

**Target 4**

Reduction in the number of days lost to suspensions to 15%

Our achievements included:

- A decrease in suspension rate over the year.
- Increased development in Individual Behaviour Plans
- Increased development for Case Management of Individual Students
- Higher level of student engagement in Verona program affecting a decrease in inappropriate behaviour

**Target 5**

Quality Teaching Framework incorporated in all programs

Our achievements include:

- Significance and connectedness incorporated into programs increasing engagement for students.
- Incorporating elements of quality teaching into visual posters placed within all school environments
- Increased staff understanding of the quality teaching framework.

**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 the quality teaching and a financial audit.

**Educational and management practice**

Financial Audit

**Background**

A financial audit of the school was completed during Term Four. The aim was to review all financial records related to school funds budgets and practices.

**Findings and conclusions**

The findings of the financial audit reflected that the school had maintained outstanding records. All areas of school finance had been accounted for and managed to support all areas of the school community.

**Future directions**

The school will continue to maintain accurate financial records and endeavour to set budgets that will best cater for the learning and welfare of Verona students.

**Curriculum**

Quality Teaching

**Background**

Quality teaching is a vital tool in providing students with the best possible learning outcomes. Staff will begin to implement the elements of quality teaching within all teaching and learning programmes, lessons and whole school activities.

**Findings and conclusions**

After a review of quality teaching within the school, the elements of significance, quality learning environment and intellectual quality were selected, as the primary focus for the school.
Professional development will continue in this area in order to embed quality teaching within the school community.

Future directions
The three areas of quality teaching, significance, quality learning environment and intellectual quality will be incorporated into all teaching and learning programs. Clear examples will be demonstrated to students within lessons to best cater for the learning needs of both classes to individuals and classes.

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.

- Establishment of the frog pond
- The successful introduction of reward (level) and curriculum excursions
- Student reintegration into their home school
- Improved technology facilities
- Introduction of interactive whiteboards
- Helping students reach their goals
- Presentation Day
- Increased Student Enrolment
- Improved communication with parents and home schools

Professional learning
Staff attended a range of professional development to increase and develop their teaching and classroom management skills. The professional learning included:

- Five staff attending the NSW Behaviour Schools Conference. Workshops and speakers at the conference presented seminars around literacy, numeracy, ICT and the engagement of students with behaviour disorders.
- Bill Rogers Cracking the Hard Class and Creating a Resilient Schools workshop
- A joint school inservice with Yennora Public School.
- Other professional development sessions included: Assisting Refugees at School, Making a Difference, Teach more not less,

Staff learning was also supported by school level professional development that focussed on improving school policies and teaching programs.

School development 2009 – 2011

Targets for 2010

Target 1
Implement reading lessons to encourage a greater use of library resources.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Introducing a monitoring system to access student progress.
- Purchasing high interest, ability appropriate resources to engage students.
- Timetabling reading sessions within literacy periods.

Our success will be measured by:

- Improved results for all students across all areas of literacy assessed within class
- Improved reading skills as measured by the Neale Reading Analysis.
- Increased usage of library resources and facilities

Target 2
Implement PBIS signage within key areas of the school community to encourage school rules, behavioural expectations and language.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- PBIS and social skills lessons on the expectations required to be a respectful, responsible and a safe learner.
- Posters displaying the expectations of PBIS across all school environments
- Staff engaged in professional learning related to establishing the expectations of PBIS within a school community.

Our success will be measured by:

- An increase of staff implementing the language of PBIS
- A poster outlining the expectations of PBIS presented around the school.
- A decrease in the suspension rate by 5%

Target 3
Introduce systematic curriculum programming which involves a Verona specific Scope &
Sequence to guide classroom programs developed by teachers

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Introducing a yearly programming schedule outlining topics linked to subject areas.
- Instilling a new programming format that implements components of quality teaching.
- Professional development of staff during learning support meetings.

Our success will be measured by:

- A percentage of programs written using the new format.
- Quality teaching components clearly embedded in teaching.
- Regular attendance at learning support meetings.

Target 4

Establish a guest speaker program. Guest speakers will be invited to the school to promote the values of being a responsible, respectful and safe learner.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Inviting guest speakers from a variety of vocational backgrounds to talk to students about the importance of education and setting personal goals.
- Developing an ongoing relationship with the Verona school community.
- Students gaining an understanding of the importance of being a responsible, respectful and safe learner.

Our success will be measured by:

- Reporting of the guest speaker in local newspapers and school newsletters.
- Organising one guest speaker from a range of occupations per term.
- Students actively engaged during guest speaker visits.

Target 5

Develop links with parents/carers, community groups, businesses and schools within the Granville district through communication books, BBQ’s and open days, newsletters and workshops.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Invite parents, guardians, community groups to attend school events such as Open days, BBQs.
- Communication books for parents, guardians and students.
- Newsletters to be distributed parents and guardians twice a term.
- Parental workshops on a range of topics.

Our success will be measured by:

- The number of parents and guardians that attend the school events.
- Gaining the support of local businesses through donations.
- Establishing strong links between school and home environments.

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.

Robert Patruno, Principal
Helen Sim, Teacher
Rita Ciccarelli, School Administration Manager

School contact information
Verona School
135B Fairfield Street
Fairfield East 2165

Ph: 02 9721 0488
Fax: 02 9721 1470
Email: Verona-s.school@det.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 5583

Parents can find out more information about Annual School Report, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at: