Principal's message

Verona School provides support for students who have difficulties managing their behaviour in their home school. It has been operating on its present site since 2003 and continues to offer a short term intervention program of 40 weeks duration.

During the year a lot has been achieved in improving the facilities at Verona and this enabled our school to provide a safer environment for our students. It has also allowed a greater opportunity to enhance the educational setting for our students to further support their needs in learning.

This opportunity was largely due to the ‘Investment in our Schools’ Project. The following items were included in this:

- A large shade structure has been built to provide shelter from the weather.
- The computer areas within the classrooms have been refurbished to accommodate the extra computers
- The cabling was upgraded to allow for extra computers to work on our system
- New security fencing

The new shade structure has been a welcomed addition to the playground area. In the classroom area having the refurbished computer area has allowed students greater access to technology and increased engagement in their learning.

I would like to take the chance to thank the families and staff of Verona for their support throughout the year.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school’s achievements and areas for development.

Helen Sim
Relieving Principal

School context

Student information

Student enrolment profile

Verona School has a maximum of 21 students catering for students in the years 5-8. It is an integrating program whereby students attend Verona School for four days a week maintaining contact with their home school for the remaining day of the week. Gradually they increase this time until they have fully reintegrated back into their home school. This occurs over a 40-week period.

In 2008 the student population of the school includes:

- 75% male
- 25% female
- 37.5% Aboriginal
- 25% NESB

The school’s population can vary dramatically from year to year due to the short term nature of the program. 62% of this year’s students will reintegrate fully back into their home school. 25% of this year’s students will complete their education at an alternative setting with the remaining students seeking opportunities in the workforce.

Student attendance profile

Student attendance yearly average was at 68% for 2008. The majority of absences have been supported by a note or contact by phone from home.

Students attending Verona are often required to travel by bus and train. Only a minority receive special transport, provided by the Department of Education and Training. Many of the students attending Verona access support agencies outside of school.

Class structure

Classes at Verona have a maximum of 7 students with a teacher and a Support person. The School has 3 classes of mixed ability.
Due to the majority of students in Verona being of high school age classes were unable to be structured to have a separate primary class.

**Staff information**

**Staff establishment**

Verona continues to have a diverse staffing population with teachers having a variety of skills and abilities. The staff consists of nine staff altogether with five members being support staff and administration.

Counsellor allocation is one day per week for Verona. Verona has had the consistency of the same counsellor over a long period of time which has been important for our students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Staff retention**

In 2008 there were a few changes that occurred during the year. These were largely due to a staff member being on maternity leave and another filling a secondment position at another school. These positions were successfully filled by temporary casuals for the length of the year.

**Staff attendance**

Staff has access to leave entitlements such as sick leave. In 2008 the average daily attendance rate for permanent staff, as determined by the Department, was 95%.

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary:</th>
<th>30/11/2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>228,633.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>52,821.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>18,425.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>209.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>13,156.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>90.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>313,337.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Expenditure</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
<td>9,693.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
<td>850.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>578.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
<td>3,441.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>90,244.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
<td>16,446.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>6,898.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>4,593.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>90.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>2,912.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td>135,749.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
<td>177,587.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A full copy of the school's 2008 financial statement is available from the Principal. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

**School performance 2008**

**Achievements**

**Aboriginal Education**

Throughout the year students have been involved in learning about aspects of Aboriginal culture in various curriculum areas. The students have investigated famous Aboriginal people and acknowledged their achievements. This has provided an inspiration for the students giving them an understanding of overcoming adversity.

The students have identified the dream time and the importance of story telling to the aboriginal people and were able to gain insight into how
story telling is an integral part of the aboriginal culture. They have particularly enjoyed creating aboriginal artwork, using the traditional form of dot painting and making their designs.

Sport
Students participated in the Premier’s sporting challenge this year. This challenge has been designed to actively encourage students into healthier lifestyles by promoting participation in physical exercise. The students at Verona achieved a level that qualified them to earn sporting equipment for the school. It was decided to purchase a wide variety of sporting equipment to give the students at Verona an opportunity to try different types of sports that they may not have experienced before.

Social Skills
Rock and Water
Rock and Water continued with great success with students continuing to develop important skills that will assist them in their daily lives. The focus has still been on learning self management, looking at different approaches to work through potential difficulties. Activities are designed to assist students learn different strategies to resolve difficult situations. One of the favourite activities involved using balance and skill which presented students with a different form of challenge. They had to work together cooperatively to succeed in the task.

Significant programs and initiatives
TAFE
Gateways is a TAFE program offered to eligible students who are at risk of leaving the education system early. Two Verona students attended and were successful in completing the course in Metal Fabrication for a term. This course was invaluable to the students, as it allowed them to experience an adult educational environment. The students enjoyed learning some basic skills in metal fabrication and this gave them an insight into trades that require these skills. The student also learnt that TAFE offers many practical courses and is a viable option for further education that will lead to a wider variety of choices in their future endeavours.

Multicultural education
A Verona student attended the Artlinks workshops which is a Multicultural program designed to celebrate a student’s identity. The students at the workshop were asked to investigate where they came from and the importance of their culture. They looked at the significance of the traditions and customs that make up their culture and were asked to represent this in art form. The students completed research on their culture and collected ideas as a basis for their artwork. The ideas included symbols that are unique to their culture. Many students found in the search that they had more than culture to identify with. For the Verona student this was not only a celebration of their own culture but also recognition of others. They were able to work alongside other pupils who had very different backgrounds in a respectful and understanding environment. The students were encouraged to acknowledge the differences and appreciate them whilst acknowledging and being proud of their own cultural identity. The Artlinks Program culminates in an art exhibition of all the students’ artworks held at a local venue. All students, their families, celebrated artist Bronwyn Bancroft who oversees the students’ artworks, associated Teachers, along with members of the local community are invited to view the students’ works. The program was replicated at Verona with medium of art being used to introduce an understanding of multiculturalism in a positive way. It gave all the students at Verona the opportunity to experience aspects of other cultures and learn about acceptance and understanding all people.

Respect and responsibility
Students are encouraged at Verona to have respect for all others. They accept as part of their self management the respecting of all staff members and other students alike. Explicit teaching and practice of this core value is consistently reinforced at Verona. This is encouraged through rewarding appropriate behaviour with the expectation of this behaviour generalising into the students’ daily lives.
Student Teachers

In 2008 the Sydney Catholic University contacted Verona to place students at our school for their community service which is a component of their course. It was the first time that Verona had participated in such a scheme and it was seen as highly successful from both the staff and students perspective. The students were a welcomed addition to the staff, acting in the capacity of an assistant in the classroom.

Progress on 2008 targets

Target 1
To improve the literacy learning outcomes for students

Our achievements include:
- Professional development to improve the depth of teacher’s knowledge in each subject area
- Developing competency in other KLA’s outside teacher’s training
- Utilising technology to assist with literacy development
- Programs developed to encourage a connectedness to literacy with an emphasis placed on practical applications.

Target 2
To improve the numeracy learning outcomes for all students:

Our achievements include:
- Utilising technology to assist with numeracy development.
- Developing significance in their learning by having students incorporate numeracy skills in practical situations. Students had to select appropriate numeracy skills to solve the problems.
- Developed maths programs to promote learning and engagement in numeracy
- Tracking systems introduced to monitor improvements in students numeracy outcomes

Target 3
To improve student learning outcomes in information and communication technologies

Our achievements include:
- Computer accessibility increased. Students able to access computers on an individual basis
- Computer environment enhanced with installation of new computer area.
- Upgrading of cabling for computer system to cater for more computers
- 100% of students increasing their computer skills
- Professional development undertaken by staff for computers

Target 4
To improve the literacy learning outcomes for students

Our achievements include:
- Participation in social skills program to develop self management skills
- Maintaining a safe environment to ensure safety of all students
- New safety communication system put in place
- Increased communication with parents/carers

Target 5
To improve the reintegration process with the students returning to full time attendance in their mainstream school within four terms:

Our achievements include:
- Improved communication between home schools and Verona
- 70% of students reintegrated back into home schools.
- Increased classroom teacher involvement in integration process

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 Teaching and behaviour skills.
Educational and management practice

Teaching

Background

Teaching and support staff responded to a survey designed to ascertain areas of strengths and areas that may require review. 100% of staff completed the survey with positive suggestions on current systems and programs in place at Verona.

Areas of strengths were identified as:

- As many of our students have significant learning difficulties, there is the capacity to provide individual education programs
- The ability to provide clear direction for students and allow them to develop self management skills.

Future directions

Staff contributed to suggestions involving further developing of the reward based system. It was a positive response to the survey that has led to a restructure of the current system. This was a productive outcome that would encourage students who have difficulty with managing their behaviour to achieve self management.

Curriculum

Background

Behaviour Skills

By the time students have reached Verona they very often have poor academic confidence. This is often a contributing factor to their behaviour. By providing a safe environment, students often respond well and are able to willing to accept assistance with their work and this has the knock on affect of both behaviour and academic ability improving.

Verona has a daily recording sheet that can provide data on each student’s progress. These tracking sheets can be used as an indicator of student’s readiness to return to their home schools. If a students percentage score is consistently over 70% for the week it is indicating that the student and has the potential to return to their home school.

Findings and conclusions

For 2008 70% of Verona students returned to their mainstream school. 20% remained in education in an alternative setting.

Future directions

Increased focus on retention of students in an educational setting.

Professional learning

Professional learning was undertaken at the school level during staff development days.

All staff also attended a “Helping Adolescent boys” workshop at Gosford in Term 3. Staff were also involved in training in “Stop, Think, Do”, Leadership, Mental health conference

First aid accreditation was achieved by 4 staff

SAS expenditure in professional learning was $1450

Staff expenditure in professional learning was $2139
School development 2009 – 2011

Targets for 2009

Target 1
100% of students achieve improved outcomes in Literacy based on school assessment records

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Introduce an assessment schedule to assist in mapping of students progress
- Installation of Interactive whiteboards in all classrooms to enhance student engagement in literacy
- Identify and introduce ICT based literacy programs to assist in student engagement in literacy

Our success will be measured by:

- All students achieving growth in literacy skills as measured in class assessment strategies
- Classroom practice demonstrating Quality Teaching elements forming the basis of all practices in delivering programs

Target 2
100% of students achieve improved outcomes in Numeracy based on school assessment records

- Purchase high interest resources to engage students in Numeracy tasks
- Introduce assessment schedule to assist in mapping of students progress every term.
- Environment project initiative to facilitate improved student engagement and learning and further develop the significance of numeracy

Our success will be measured by:

- All students achieving growth in numeracy skills as measured in class assessment strategies
- Classroom practice demonstrating Quality Teaching elements forming the basis of all practices in delivering programs

Target 3
Student attendance to be sustained at or over 90%

- Establish a student reward system that is focussed on positive behaviour, enhanced links with home schools and high engagement in learning
- Establish three school rules and implement revised program to embed effective language across all aspects of school life – linked with PBIS approach
- Provide students with stimulating and active learning experiences while also providing appropriate leisure equipment at break times in the playground

Our success will be measured by:

- 100% of students achieving recognition for appropriate and on-task behaviour
- Increased attendance and punctuality of students
- Decrease in days lost to absenteeism to 25%

Target 4
Reduction in the number of days lost to suspensions to 15%

- Development of strategic and systematic sharing of data and assessments between shared schools, on all students attending Verona
- Students involved in developing their Individual Learning Plan and/or Individual Behaviour Plan
- Staff to engage with professional learning in integration processes including communication, assessment, IBP, IEP and case review techniques

Our success will be measured by:

- Assessment data collected regularly
- Decrease in days lost to suspensions to 15%
Target 5

**Quality Teaching Framework incorporated in all programs**

- Implement the Quality Teaching Framework in all curriculum areas
- Targeted professional learning program focussed on literacy, numeracy and ICT to build teacher and school leader capacity to support school improvement and student learning
- Implement systems and practices in the school culture which enhance staff feelings of being valued, appreciated and professionally accountable

Our success will be measured by:

- Evidence of Quality Teaching being implemented in the classroom
- Evidence of improved student outcomes in school assessment data
- Individual staff professional learning programs support the school plan

### 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.

Helen Sim, Relieving Principal
Josine Baz, Classroom Teacher
Joanne Eggleton, Classroom 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 Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at: