Verona School
Annual School Report
Our school at a glance

Students

Verona School supports 28 students from school Years Five to Ten, who are experiencing difficulty in managing their behaviour and emotional wellbeing in a mainstream school. The school provides proactive and pro social learning programs to assist students in meeting both their academic and social outcomes.

Staff

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

Significant programs and initiatives

In 2012, Verona School effectively implemented a variety of outstanding teaching and welfare programs. These allowed students to achieve not only their learning and social outcomes, but also be reintegrated back into mainstream educational settings.

Verona School was the recipient of two Regional Awards, in the areas of:

- Student Engagement,
- School Administration.

Significant programs and initiatives included:

- Animal welfare workshop by the RSPCA
- An increase in the highly successful levels and curriculum excursions.
- Anti-Racism Day.
- Beginning Teacher Workshops
- Community safety and respect initiative ran by the Police Dog’s Unit.
- Guest speaker program, including the ‘Becoming Invincible’ workshop.
- Links to Sydney University, University of Western Sydney, Macquarie University and University of New South Wales. This included having practicum students at our school, special programs such as ‘Bigger than a Bully’ and being special guest lecturers.

- Implementation of the Community of Schools initiative with both mainstream and special educational school settings working in collaboration to better cater for our student’s needs.
- Increased participation in NAPLAN assessments.
- Outreach Program: ‘Bigger than a Bully’ was delivered to over 2000 students across a number of educational regions and settings.
- Outreach Programs on improving student behaviour, engaging parents, managing emotional disturbance and behavioural disorder student’s, Pacific Islander and bullying.
- PCYC Sport initiative.
- Professional Development for staff in the development and use of IPad’s, Mathletics, Smart Notebook, NCI and PART training.
- Professional Development in mainstream school settings for our colleagues in managing student behaviours and the Verona School model.
- School murals based on the expectations of being a Respectful, Responsible and Safe learner.
- Sporting workshops with the National Rugby League, Australian Football League and New South Wales Cricket.
- Steps to Success: An Aboriginal Education Program specifically developed to assist Aboriginal students.
- Strong Community Links with South West Connections, Work Solutions Fairfield, Fairfield RSL, Fairfield Police and Bunning’s Warehouse.
- The implementation of the Seven Elements of Expectation.

Student achievement in 2012

In 2012, six students made the successful integration back to their home school, after a successful intervention program conducted at the school. Over 43% of students increased their integration time at their home schools.

Messages

Principal’s message

Verona School provides a proactive intervention program for students experiencing behavioural and emotional difficulties in a mainstream school setting. The school offers a range of outstanding programs and facilities to support students in achieving both their learning and social outcomes.

In 2012, Verona School once again achieved exceptional improvement in student attendance and a reduction in the suspension rate. These results were a directly linked to the extraordinary academic and welfare programs developed and implemented across the school community.

In 2012 students strongly engaged in the Guest Speaker program. Guest speakers included:

- Australian Football League (AFL),
- Books in Homes Ambassador and ABC television presenter, Costa Georgiadis.
- Cabramatta Street Team
- Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs players
- Fairfield RSL
- Juvenile Justice
- NSW Cricket
- NSW Police
- National Rugby League Development Team
- Powerhouse Museum Writing Workshop

The school developed a number of strong community associations. These links provided the school with a number of opportunities to enhance student outcomes.

- Bellaboo provided our female students with a day’s beauty and hair dressing treatment. It was the highlight of the year for many of the students.
- Bunning’s Warehouse provided generous support in the form of donations, gift vouchers, teaching resources and volunteers.
- Canterbury Bulldog’s night game.
- CRS Australia assisted our students in working towards post school options, part time employment and qualification’s.
- Mission Australia provided the school with a family therapist one day a week in Semester One.
• Work Solutions Fairfield provided a part-time integration consultant to assist students in developing self esteem and anger management skills.

The many achievements this year were only possible due to the support of teachers, parents, guardians and community members. I would personally like to take this opportunity to thank the students and staff of Verona School.

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 28 students and including students from years 5 to 10. The school conducts an intervention program that supports students in improving their learning and social outcomes in their mainstream setting. At the school, students attend up four days a week and attend the fifth day at their home school. This timetable encourages the students to continue an ongoing connection with their school and reintegrate back to their home school at the completion of their time at Verona. This year Verona has had an increase in enrolments by female students.

In 2012 the student population of the school included:

- Male 66%
- Female 34%
- Aboriginal 31%
- NESB 15%

The population of the school community was 28 during the year. This is due to the enrolment and integration procedure linked to the school. About 23% of the students reintegrated back to their home school. Over 43% of students increased their integration time at their home schools, with 100% of students involved with outside agencies.

Student enrolment profile

The school operated at 100% capacity during the year. This was the first time the school has maintained capacity since the school was established in 2004.

Student attendance profile

Attendance statistics in 2012 showed an improvement at Verona School. Overall attendance increased by 3%. In 2010, days attended at the school totalled 1396 days while in 2011, 1876 were attended by students. In 2012 total days attended at the school was 1923. Therefore, an extra 47 days of school were attended in 2012.

Suspensions significantly reduced in 2012. In 2011, our suspension rate was at 9%. In 2012, it had reduced to 5%.

A number of students require special transport provided by the NSW Department of Education and Training. A majority of students travel independently by public transport. A high percentage of students also access 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. The school also engaged the Home School Liaison Officer to follow up truancy issues.

This allowed the school to not only make instant contact with the home in regard to attendance, but also resolve any attendance issues.
The Assistant Principal ran a pilot study to improve whole school attendance. The ‘Counts So Does School Attendance Project’ was a multifaceted program that engaged students in attendance and worked in conjunction with the Verona School Welfare Policy and New South Wales University Special Education lecturers. Student feedback was highly positive and the program improved student attendance in the later weeks of Term Three.

Class sizes

Class sizes are included in the annual school report in order to provide parents and guidelines with as much local information as possible. The following table shows our class sizes as reported at the 2012 Class Size Audit conducted on Monday 21 March 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Student Numbers</th>
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<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>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Seven</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structure of classes

Verona caters for a maximum of 7 students per class with a teacher and a School Learning Support Officer. The school has four 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, four teachers, four support staff and a counsellor.

Each member contributes an important role in both improving and supporting outcomes for all students.

Staff establishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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The National Education Agreement requires schools to report on Indigenous composition of their workforce.

Staff retention

In 2012, the substantive position at the school decreased by 33%. The decrease in permanency was the result of staff promotions. The school has a number of beginning teachers and is benefiting from their enthusiasm and willingness to proactively engage our students across all areas of the school community. They have been able to work within the current school structure which has enabled the above mentioned programs to become embedded throughout 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>
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<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
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Financial summary

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

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<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary:</th>
<th>30/11/2012</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>74740.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>116093.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>3140.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>8939.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>386575.99</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditure</strong></td>
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<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
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<td>Key learning areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
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<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
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<td>Library</td>
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<td>Training &amp; development</td>
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<td>Maintenance</td>
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<td>Trust accounts</td>
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<td>Capital programs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
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A full copy of the school’s 2012 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 2012

The school achieved all of its goals for 2012. This allowed the school the opportunity to provide the optimum learning and social opportunities for students.

Achievements

Arts

Students under the guidance of the Visual Arts Exhibition Committee, took part in the Verona School Art Exhibition. Students learnt various techniques and strategies to creating fantastic art work. As part of the Verona Visual Arts program, students created various pieces of outstanding art works based on their exploring their feelings through the medium of painting. Students showed a tremendous level of pride in painting their art works which were very well received by numerous members of the school community including local members of parliament, home school Principals and parents / guardians.

Mr Guy Zangari MP at the Art Exhibition

THE VIP Program: Elective Program

The Verona Interest Program (VIP) has once again been a major success of our weekly timetable. The students have thoroughly enjoyed the variety of options the dedicated staff at Verona School
has provided this year to enrich our students learning, knowledge and understanding. These interests are generally developed from student’s external school interests and / or hobbies.

Due to the VIP programs success we increased its program time by 100% for 2012.

The Verona Interest Program (VIP) this year included a Fitness Program, IPads, Visual Arts, DJ’ing, Gardening, Movie Making, Social Skills Games and a Healthy Cooking Program. Students have greatly enjoyed the VIP program since its introduction in 2010 with students achieving numerous outcomes in a variety of courses. This program not only increased student engagement, namely student attendance, on a Tuesday and Friday afternoon but also improved fitness levels and self-esteem leading to a reduction in student management referrals during afternoon sessions.

The students have demonstrated a variety of previously learnt skills in these sessions and the staff have been able to see our students flourish in a number of pursuits that are not part of their daily academic curriculum. Through the hard work and dedication of the entire school staff at Verona we have been able to assist our students in developing their skill set and fostering positive school experiences through choice and personal endeavor.

Students have greatly appreciated selecting their own elective choices and this has resulted in an decrease in negative referrals on a Tuesday and Friday afternoon.

Community of Schools: Outreach Program

In 2012, Verona School delivered an Outreach Program to assist schools within the Granville Education Group with a range of social based issues. The programs included:

- Bigger Than a Bully – Anti-Bullying program
- Implementing common language
- Pacific Islander Program
- Send me to a Behaviour School-Behavioural Program
- “The Seven Elements of Expectation”
- The Time is Now – Parenting Program
- Working with Emotional Disturbance and Behavioural Disorder students
- Writing Personalised Learning and Social Plans

Over the course of the year, our staff have presented to over 2000 students, 400 professional and over 110 parents.

The workshops were very well received by all participants and schools had many requests for a repeat of the programs in 2013.

National Rugby League Workshops

The NRL workshops were conducted over four weeks at the school to the delight of all students. Both students and staff took part in a wide variety of activities based on developing their understanding and skills in the area of Rugby League. The NRL workshops were a huge success with many students improving their skills during the intensive workshops.
**RSPCA School Visit**

As part of the 2012 guest speaker program, the RSPCA visited our school community with a number of students showing a passion for animal care. The RSPCA team discussed animal awareness, welfare and how to care for a variety of animals. Our students then ventured to the Yagoona RSPCA and visited the animals, follow on from the success of that visit they attended an equestrian excursion. This was the first time any of our students had been to such an event, therefore increasing their access and engagement in community activities. One student then completed a work experience program due to the highly engaging excursions.

**AFL Development Team**

The AFL Development team visited our school four times this year to develop student’s skills in the area Aussie Rules. The entire school community was involved in a range of activities designed to increase fitness and social skills. A number of students displayed some outstanding skills over the past twelve months.

**PCYC at Cabramatta**

Since 2010, we have developed a strong collaboration between Verona school and the Cabramatta Police Citizens Youth Club.

Senior Constable Nick has been a strong support of the Verona School community over the past three years and he has worked hard at supporting students achieve their social outcomes. Every Monday and Wednesday students and staff go to the PCYC to take part in a number of sporting activities such as basketball, fitness, slide hockey and indoor soccer. We look forward to continuing our strong collaboration in 2013 and working towards improving our students overall health and well-being.

**School Camp at Teen Ranch**

The school conducted their second camp this year, with the school community going to the Teen Ranch at Cobbitty. The students were involved in a number of activities over the two day camp. The activities included swimming, canoeing, low ropes, horse riding, bush walks and rock climbing. It was a great experience for all those involved.

The Verona School Camp is the first experience away from home for many of our students. Thus, having a direct impact on their social skill development, self-esteem and self-confidence.

**Music**

In 2012, the students of Verona school engaged in a variety of musical activities.

In Semester One, a new digital music element was introduced with programming and song development highly successful and engaging for all students.

In Semester Two, the students focused on popular music and engaged in structured listening tasks as well as solo performance techniques. Several students selected a piece of music to focus on as either a vocalist or instrumentalist, and many students showed great natural talent and steady improvement. Stand out vocalists included Sata Dawo and Louise Hubbard.

The students also tried their hand at composition using computer software in VIP lessons to create some fantastic electronic music.
Sport

The Verona School Sports Program has yet again been a highlight for many of our students. We had our inaugural Verona School vs. Lomandra School Sports Day. This was a very successful and fun day where the students competed in a variety of sports in a fun, friendly, respectful and safe manner. This was an extension of our community of schools project and we look forward to repeating this with Lomandra and other schools next year.

We have been very fortunate to have the continued collaboration and outstanding support of Constable Nick from Cabramatta PCYC who has provided our students with access, through the picking up and dropping off of our students in the PCYC minivan to the many and varied activities at the PCYC on both Mondays and Wednesday afternoons for our students. They have been participating in Indoor Soccer, Touch Football, Volleyball, Slider Hockey, Weights and Fitness Training and a variety of games such as Table Tennis.

As part of our sports program, the school has established a specialist coaching through links with New South Wales Cricket, the Australian Football League ambassadors program, NRL and the Parramatta Eels. The students really enjoy these valuable learning experiences and they have once again been active learners for many of our students in 2012.

At Verona School, we have also provided Sport sessions in a number of activities including: European Handball, Softball, Soccer, Touch Football, Volleyball, Basketball and a variety of social based games. The staff at Verona School really enjoys playing and participating in sporting sessions as they improve student fitness levels, team building skills and student motivation.

The 2012 School Sports Champion was Carolyn Diaz and we look forward to another new winner this year.

The school purchased a variety of new sporting equipment in 2012, such as fitness equipment, due to the Premiers Sporting Challenge Grant.

Students participated in a variety of sports including:
- Australian Football
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cricket
- European Handball
- Netball
- Rugby League
- Soccer
- Table Tennis
- Touch Football
- Volleyball

Sporting Recognition

The Sports recognition program awarded students for being respectful, responsible and safe learners during various sporting activities. The awards encouraged students to be active participants in sporting programs. Both a sports person of the week was awarded and weekly participation points given to students. These points were collated and an award for Sports Person of the Year was issued on Presentation Day.
The Seven Elements of Expectations

The Seven Elements of Expectation were developed at Verona School during 2010 to support student management and common language within the school. The elements incorporated Choice Theory, Positive Behaviour Intervention Systems, Restorative Practices, Non Crisis Intervention and PART Training. These elements allowed the staff to use a common language to support students in the school in working towards becoming successful learners.

To enhance the Seven Elements of Expectation the school implements a Positive Behaviour Intervention System and Values education units as part of student’s Our Time for Learning lessons and PDHPE lessons.

Positive Behaviour Intervention System and Values Education

Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports, is a behaviour management strategy that we have developed into an explicit teaching program. We have focused on the three core expectations of being a Respectful, Responsible and Safe Learner.

We are explicitly teaching what it means to be a respectful, responsible and safe learner in a number on environments, including inside the classroom, outside the classroom, on public transport, within the wider community and at home. This program has been highly successful and the staff now uses common language throughout the school day of ‘Are you being a respectful learner?’ etc. The use of common and simplified language has allowed our students to re-engage in the learning process, so they can reflect on their own behaviour, resolve the issue at hand and then restart the lesson in a positive manner.

We then developed a Values Education Unit that primarily focuses on explicitly teaching social skills and community values. As most students at Verona experience difficulty with accepting ownership of their negative choices and the consequences it may cause. We are focusing on teaching the expectations required to not only make a successful transition back to their home schools but also the wider community. This will therefore provide our students with the necessary skills to function and prosper in a highly competitive and changing world. This unit has been very well received and has produced some very interesting and challenging debates on a range of issues, that adults and young children alike, experience in today’s society.

Student Canteen Program

A number of our students requested a school canteen. Due to the small numbers of our student community, we discussed with the students a number of options. It was decided upon by all members of the school community to deliver a Tuesday Lunch Program.

The Tuesday Lunch Program is a student led program where we provide a range of lunch options for our students to enjoy. We always look for healthy food alternatives at Verona School and are consistently teaching our students a wide range of healthy cooking methods which are the foundation of our Food Technology programmes.

We would like to thank Lomandra School for providing a range of food options for our students. The various fruit selections have assisted our students in making healthier food choices.

Swimming Program

Students in Years 6 participated in the Department of Education and Communities
School Swimming Scheme during Weeks five and six of Term Four. This was the third time that students were able to participate in this potentially lifesaving activity.

Student participation and efforts were outstanding throughout the two weeks, and students learnt the necessary skills that contribute to greater safety in and around the water.

Students improved their skills in floating both with and without flotation devices, treading water, survival swimming and stroke correction.

I would like to congratulate, Alex, Brianna and Carolyn on their achievements during the program.

**Student Teachers**

Verona School hosted a number of students from various fields this year. The students included not only student teachers but also social workers and medical students. The experience gained at Verona assisted students in completing part of their teaching practicum and community experiences required for their courses.

Three medical students from Western Sydney University completed their community access experience at Verona School. Both the school community and students greatly benefited from their experience. We would like to thank the students for their assistance with our students and we wish them well in their future career paths.

We also had teachers retraining in Special Education from Sydney and the Australian Catholic Universities. Students took part in professional development from the Verona School staff.

After feedback from the student teachers, medical students, the retraining teachers and their University supervisors, we are looking forward to continuing our strong relationship with the many and varied educational institutions in 2013.

**Curriculum Excursions 2012**

2012 resulted in an increase in both levels and curriculum excursions. Our students experienced up to eighteen different excursions throughout the school year. Students took part in a variety of Curriculum Excursions to compliment the wide range of subjects taught at Verona School.

In the first semester, our female students attended a beauty and lifestyle workshop. They were given haircuts, makeovers, beauty tips and advice from professional hairstylists, and beauticians. The girls thoroughly enjoyed the experience and we would like to thank Bellaboo and Snezna Kerekovic for her teams work with our students. It was the highlight of the year for many of our girls.

In the area of Science, we took our students to Taronga Zoo to complete their biodiversity units of work. The students were able to see a number of the animals that they had studied in real life and were able to walk through the native fauna section, meeting the diverse range of animals which inhabit Australia.

In the area of Australian History, the School welcomed Paul Martin’s Australian Military History Exhibition. This gave the students the opportunity to fully interact with an extensive collection from Australia’s military past.

The students also participated in a Sydney Harbour Bridge Pylon walk. They were able to learn about the history of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and view first-hand the many challenges that making the bridge brought its workers. They were then fortunate to visit the Books in Homes company office where our students were given a BBQ lunch overlooking Sydney Harbour from Milson’s Point. This was a wonderful day out for our whole school community.

Verona School students attend termly Level Three and Level Five rewards excursions which encourage our students to broaden their horizons and engage their learning in a wider community
beyond the classroom. Levels excursions are a vital part of the Student Welfare Policy. These excursions promote the expectations of being a respectful, responsible and safe learner, whilst provide our students with the opportunity to develop the social, emotional, environmental and cultural outcomes that will assist them into becoming successful members of our communities.

In Stage Five Geography, we discussed the Australian environment, analysed data, labelled diagrams and maps and made links to the Aboriginal Eight Ways of Learning.

Students have demonstrated that they have been highly engaged in the humanities curriculum and are developing a wide range of skills which are transferrable across the whole school curriculum.

Excursion to The Sydney Equestrian Centre

**Human Society and its Environment**

This year in Stage Four History, we studied the past societies of Ancient Greece and China. This being the year of the London Olympics it was appropriate to look at the foundation and legacy of the modern Olympic Games.

In Stage Five History, we had an excursion to the Sydney Harbour Bridge pylon lookout which was part of our in class research site study. The students thoroughly enjoyed the experience, looking at our famous bridge and stunning harbour. We would also like to thank ‘Books in Homes’ for hosting a BBQ at their offices.

In Stage Four Geography, we looked at the impact of Globalisation on cultures around the world. We compared past technologies to new technologies and how that affects how we currently live and work.

**Academic**

**Progress in literacy and numeracy**

Literacy and Numeracy are the foundation for learning at Verona School, staff focused on improving our student’s literacy and numeracy test results by embedding literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. As we have a constantly changing student cohort, we use proactive strategies to engage our students in a variety of literacy based tasks.

This year the school had a writing workshop course instructed by Powerhouse Youth Theatre, Our students were encouraged to write their own stories and view other students published works. Our students thoroughly enjoyed the program and congratulations go to Lily Aniseko, Carolyn Diaz and Sata Dawo for their outstanding contributions.

The ‘Books in Homes’ initiative, provided our students with their own books which they were able to take home and enjoy at their own discretion. We would like to thank all of the staff at ‘Books in Homes’ and Costa Georgiadis for being the ‘Books in Home’ ambassador and demonstrating the joys of reading to our school community.
Following the success of last year’s modification to timetabled literacy and numeracy lessons, we continued to deliver literacy and numeracy every morning as this is our students most focused learning times. This allowed our students to improve their basic skills and gain an increased self-esteem. Their confidence in these two critical areas, increased as they achieved their personalised learning plan outcomes.

Verona Schools Personalised Learning Plan

In 2012, Verona School developed and implemented Personalised Learning Plan’s for all students.

The Personalised Learning Plan was developed as it was addressed as an area of improvement by the schools executive staff. Through discussions at the Assistant Principals network meetings, Verona School designed their own Personalised Learning Plan to improve students’ academic, emotional, behavioural, welfare and social needs.

The Personalised Learning Plan incorporated a range of school based student centered documents into a single working plan.

The Personalised Learning Plan has been adopted by 50% of network schools and has been consistently praised as an excellent professional document by a number of home schools, district and regional staff.

Progress in numeracy

[Enter your text and graph from Electronic Data Summary Sheet where appropriate.]

Mathletics

In 2012, Verona School began their Mathletics Numeracy Program. The school reorganised the timetable, so that our students had a Numeracy teacher who delivered the Mathletics Program.

Our Mathletics Program consisted of the ‘The Three Part Lesson’. This was a school based teaching and learning method where our students worked on three separate sections of the Mathletics program each lesson. This involved booklet work; ICT based unit tasks and live Mathletics. Our students benefitted from the structure and consistency of these lessons and some outstanding work was completed on a number of topics including Pythagoras Theorem and Inequalities. Congratulations go to Alfred Robinson, Dallan Cotterill and Ben Merlino for their hard work and efforts during the year.

As Mathletics is now embedded throughout the Numeracy Program, the school has seen a positive attitudinal change towards Numeracy and learning Mathematical terms and concepts. Our students enjoy their Mathematical based lessons and are working towards their individualised learning goals.

Significant programs and initiatives

Guest Speaker Program

The Verona School Guest Speaker program has been an outstanding success since its inception in 2010. The program supports students in understanding and learning the various strategies individuals implement to be successful within their lives and occupations.

The guest speaker program allowed students to develop their self-esteem by meeting different people from a range of occupations including an Aboriginal Elder, AFL ambassadors, an Artist, Beyond Invincible (a dance / parkour group), Canterbury Bulldog’s Rugby League players, Costa Georgiadis from Gardening Australia, a Magazine Editor, NSW Cricket ambassadors, NRL ambassadors, a Police Dog trainer and an RSPCA worker. The program assisted staff in teaching students strategies for success from real life experiences and to gain background knowledge on a range of occupations.

The guest speaker program also involved working with students on a range of topics. These included:

- Bellaboo, for providing a workshop designed to improve girl’s self-esteem, self-concept and self-image.
- Constable Nick Mougios of the Cabramatta PCYC spoke to our students about health and safety issues and how they can best improve their quality of life.
- FYRST providing working on the negative effects of crime, anger management and drugs
- The Police Dog’s Unit trainer came and spoke to our students about training, feeding, managing police dogs and the
dogs’ roles and responsibilities. The students thoroughly enjoyed the experience and April the Labrador was a massive hit.

These programs also allowed the school to open up to the wider community and show students that there are individuals and community groups willing to provide them with the support and knowledge they require for success.

- UNSW and Sydney University Special Education Masters students
- UNSW Educational Leadership for Students with Special Needs
- Special Education Teachers and Leaders Conference

The feedback from all the presentations was highly positive with all the organisations requesting to engage in further presentations.

Excursion to Bellaboo

**Professional Presentations**

Verona School has an ongoing commitment to promoting the benefits and satisfaction of teaching students with challenging behaviours and in servicing individuals in strategies for engaging students to achieve their learning and social outcomes.

Presentations included:

- Auburn Girls High School
- Guildford West Public School
- Granville and Guildford Beginning Teachers Network
- Granville East Public School
- Mater Dei Special Education Conference
- UNSW and Sydney University Special Education Masters students
- UNSW Educational Leadership for Students with Special Needs
- Special Education Teachers and Leaders Conference

The feedback from all the presentations was highly positive with all the organisations requesting to engage in further presentations.

School Visit by the NSW Police Dog Unit - as part of the Guest Speaker Program

**Parent, student and teacher satisfaction**

In 2012 the school conducted a number of surveys of parents, students and teachers about the school.

Their responses are presented below.

- The school has strong and regular communication with parents and guardians. This is exemplified by our regular positive phone calls made by our staff and the high number of parents involved in case conference review meetings.
- Students are engaged in a variety of programs to promote learning. This includes the Verona Interest Program (VIP) and Our Time for Learning initiatives.
- Positive student reintegration into their home schools. This has resulted in six
students reintegrating back to their mainstream high schools after completing the Verona School program.

- Outstanding technology facilities. We have incorporated iPad technology and into our students curriculum to assist them in their technological development.
- The school has a supportive and friendly environment. As 91% of our parents when surveyed were positive about the Verona School community.
- Helping students reach their goals. This is demonstrated through 43% of our students increasing their reintegration time at their home schools.
- Student success is celebrated through our twice weekly assemblies, our end of semester whole school assemblies and the Verona School Art exhibition.
- Increased Student Enrolment. We are currently at full capacity.
- Strong collaboration with home schools. This is exemplified by the 51 case conference review meetings undertaken in 2012 and the 45 Student Learning Support Officers visits to our student’s home schools to assist them in reintegration back into mainstream education.

Aboriginal Education

Verona School has an Aboriginal population of 31%. Students learnt about and discussed a range of Aboriginal issues. The focus on gaining a greater appreciation of the importance of Acknowledgement of Country led to students gaining confidence in reading out the Acknowledgement during weekly assemblies, Presentation Days and Special events.

Steps to Success Aboriginal Education Program

‘Steps to Success’ is a program introduced by Verona School to increase student engagement in gaining the skills to be successful learners. The program is designed to engage Aboriginal students with learning and help students to understand the culture, history and values of Aboriginal people. The ten week program covers Music, Art, Foods and Cooking, Traditional Games and Aboriginal Values.

Verona School in 2012 made this a whole school program to enrich our student’s knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture and identity. The program has become embedded across our teaching and learning schemes of work and has become a focal point for student engagement and improving whole school attendance.

In the Unit of work Aboriginal boys design, paint, and learn the basic techniques of playing a Didgeridoo, whilst the girls designed murals. They also create their own stories by using Aboriginal symbols and learn to use traditional painting techniques on a piece of canvas.

We were fortunate to have Bill Webb do an indigenous sports and games unit with our students. Bill’s Monday and Wednesday’s afternoon program was a fantastic way for our students to learn about a variety of new games and sports and improve their health and well-being whilst learning about Aboriginal culture.

Eight Ways of Aboriginal Learning

The aims and purpose of 8 ways is to introduce Aboriginal ways of learning using symbols, stories, links to the land, environment and community and non-verbal communication. This is to enhance and provide new strategies and ways of learning in the classroom to improve learning outcomes for Aboriginal students.
Multicultural education

Verona School is a culturally diverse community with 39 percent of the school coming from a Non English Speaking Background. Teachers and students learn to value the various cultural groups within the school. These values were proactively addressed during social lessons prior to the Anti-Racism day.

Anti-Racism Day

Verona School’s annual Anti-Racism Day was another outstanding success. We had players from the Canterbury Bulldog’s come to speak to our students about their own upbringings and what race and identity means to them. They were also able to discuss a variety of questions with our students and put forth the positive message of an inclusive multicultural society and how this is demonstrated through giving respect to all people.

National Partnership Programs

In 2012 Verona School participated in the National partnership program. This program allowed the school to employ additional staff to improve students’ academic and social outcomes. The school increased its withdrawal program to support students in developing improved skills in literacy, numeracy, visual arts and communication skills. Students who were engaged in the withdrawal program had significantly higher school attendance, 28% increase, than those that did not.

The employment of a school business manager allowed for the effective management of school resources and significantly improved the quality of our school’s financial management, policies and procedures.

Progress on 2012 targets

Verona School has achieved numerous outcomes in all four targets in 2012.

Targets for 2012

Target 1

Pre and Post assessment reveal an increase in literacy outcomes.

Our achievements include:

All students completed the following tests on enrolment:

- South Australian Spelling Test
- Neale Reading Analysis

We established a number of initiatives and programs that assisted our students in developing their literacy skills. These included the following:

- Timetabled daily literacy lessons
- Verona School Withdrawal Program
- Multilit program
- Accelerated Literacy program
- Development of high interest, ability and age appropriate programs to engage students in literacy activities.
- Increase in the number of awards received by students for literacy.
- Poetry and story writing workshops through Powerhouse Youth Theatre group.

Target 2

To increase the range of and access to social wellbeing programs for all students.

Our achievements include:

- Establishment of the Community Engagement Team.
- Established links with CRS Australia. Many students engaged in a variety of courses, gained accreditations and part time work.
- Established links with WISE Employment. We targeted a specific group of students who are accessing work related learning opportunities.
• Consolidation of current social well-being programs within the school including the Verona School Breakfast program.

• Established community access awards related to achievement in the areas of social well-being.

• Developed and implemented social wellbeing programs targeting the needs of the school community, based on the Seven Elements of Expectations.

• Improved student engagement in social wellbeing programs.

• Increase in the number of awards received by students for being responsible, respectful and safe learners.

• Outreach programs: including ‘Bigger than a Bully’, the ‘Pacific Islander’ program and the Verona School Model’.

• A student received the Jason Clare Community award.

Target 3
Increase the use of ICT as an effective tool for learning in all classrooms.

Our achievements include:

• Implementation of IPads within the classroom and curriculum areas.

• Developing a number of notebook lessons in a variety of subject areas to encourage student engagement.

• Implementation of an ICT assessment tool within whole school programs.

• Development and implementation of digitalised functional behavioural assessment tool.

• Professional development for staff in the implementation of IPads within the classroom.

• Professional development in the implementation of technology within the school environment.

• Improved student engagement during lessons and the VIP program.

Target 4
Increase the capacity of teachers in utilizing the Quality Teaching Learning Framework in their teaching and assessment practice.

Our achievements include:

• Design and implementation of the Verona School digitalized teaching and learning programs across all key learning areas.

• Staff engaged in professional learning related to establishing teaching and learning programs.

• Professional development of staff during learning support meetings.

• Incorporated elements of the quality teaching framework within the teaching and learning programs.

• Incorporated the Eight Ways of Aboriginal Learning into our teaching and learning programs.

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 2012 our school carried out evaluations of school leadership and 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
Once again the school reviewed elements of Quality Teaching as a vital tool in providing students with the best possible learning outcomes. Staff implemented the elements of quality teaching within all teaching and learning programmes, lessons and whole school activities. Staff also implemented the Eight Ways of Aboriginal Learning to address our students learning goals and outcomes.

Findings and conclusions
The review clearly outlined the importance of quality teaching and the elements of significance, a quality learning environment, significance and intellectual quality in supporting students in achieving their academic and social outcomes.
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 individuals and classes. The Eight Ways of Aboriginal Learning will be imbedded throughout our curriculum and teaching and learning programs. IPads will be incorporated throughout the curriculum to assist our students in making their academic outcomes.

School Leadership
Background
A school leadership survey was undertaken with all staff as part of the National Partnership program. The aim of the survey was to gain an understanding of the school leadership at Verona School.

Findings and conclusions
In the area of school leadership both teachers and SASS staff strongly indicated that they were highly satisfied with the school leadership and school direction.

Future directions
The findings clearly stated that due to the staff only being at the school for a short period, it was critical that many of the proactive teaching and welfare programs need to be consolidated and evaluated over the next few years. This point was clearly identified from the data collected from the surveys.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction
In 2012, the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.
Their responses are presented below.

- Establishment of a new Stage Five class.
- Consolidate links to external organisations such as CRS and WISE employment to assist our students in transition.
- Student’s reintegration to their home schools to be a primary focus for our Key Stage Three and Four students.
- Developing the use of IPads throughout the school community.
- Presentations Days were highly attended.
- Increased Student Enrolment
- Improved communication with parents and home schools.
- Consolidation of the Verona School Student Elective Program.
• Consolidation of school programs such as Guest Speakers, excursions and school camp.

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

The professional learning included:

• Twelve staff attending the South Western Sydney Behaviour Schools Conference. Workshops Speakers at the conference presented seminars on literacy, numeracy, ICT and the engagement of students with behaviour disorders.

• Staff were professionally instructed in implementing the Seven Elements of Expectation and Personalised Learning Plans.

• Panaboard workshops presented at Verona School.

• A joint school in service with Karningul School.

• Other professional development sessions included: Implementing the elements of quality teaching and the Eight Ways of Aboriginal Learning

• Staff attended various meetings and conferences for the Every Student, Every School initiative.

• Staff attended the ROSA conference to assist our students in their transitions into Key Stage Six.

• The Assistant Principal attended the South Western Sydney Assistant Principals network meetings in which he was involved in implementing and developing whole school policies and procedures.

• The Assistant Principal is part of the South Western Sydney Behaviour Conference Committee for 2013 and attended planning meetings.

• Staff attended the Live Well, Personal Development, Health and Physical Education initiative, aimed at improving our students overall health and wellbeing.

• Staff attended Non Crisis Intervention Training workshops and successfully completed the course requirements.

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

School planning 2012—2014
The school planning policy provides direction for the preparation and implementation of school plans including the identification of priority areas, intended outcomes and targets that are consistent with the NSW State Plan and the Department’s planning documents.

School priority 1
Outcome for 2012–2014
Improved individual results for all students in all areas of literacy.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

• All students will complete the:
  - South Australian Spelling Test
  - Neale Reading Analysis

At the beginning of the academic school year.

• Timetabled daily literacy lessons

• Establishing awards and rewards related to achievement in the areas of literacy.

• Increase in the use of interactive whiteboards to engage students in literacy based activities.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

• Revise and develop systematic and strategic testing processes upon enrolment of students to assist in identifying gaps in student learning through the outcomes based register which formulates the students Personalised Learning Plan.
Introduce systematic curriculum programming which involves a Verona specific Scope & Sequence to guide classroom programs developed by teachers implementing Kindergarten to Stage Five Syllabi and supporting documents.

Introduce an assessment schedule to assist in mapping of students’ progress every term.

Increase usage of Interactive whiteboards in all classrooms to enhance student engagement in Literacy.

Identify and introduce literacy teaching programs that are both age and ability appropriate.

Implement practical tasks to encourage student engagement in developing basic literacy skills.

Revise Personalised Learning Plans for all students.

Revise and implement MULTILIT and Accelerated Literacy Programs to cater for the individual needs of students.

Identify and purchase culturally appropriate readers and resources.

Analysis assessment information on student entry to plan teaching and learning outcomes to meet the student’s needs, monitor progress and reporting.

Engage members of the school community in promoting the importance of literacy skills in everyday life. Parents and Guardians will be involved in workshops and ‘Books in Homes’ for students.

**School priority 2**

**Outcome for 2012–2014**

Improved individual results for all students in all areas of numeracy.

**2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:**

- Numeracy Test Developed for Behavioural Schools

At the beginning of the academic school year.

- Timetabled daily numeracy lessons
- Establishing awards and rewards related to achievement in the areas of numeracy.
- Increase in the use of interactive whiteboards to engage students in numeracy based activities.

**Strategies to achieve these targets include:**

- Revise and develop systematic and strategic testing processes upon enrolment of students to assist in identifying gaps in student learning through the outcomes based register which formulates the students Personalised Learning Plan.
- Introduce systematic curriculum programming which involves a Verona specific Scope & Sequence to guide classroom programs developed by teachers implementing Kindergarten to Stage Five Syllabi and supporting documents.
- Introduce an assessment schedule to assist in mapping of students’ progress every term.
- The school will continue to identify and introduce ICT based Numeracy programs to assist in students engaging with learning programs e.g. Study Ladder, Mathletics, iPad’s and iPod’s program.
- Revise Personalised Learning Plans for all students.
- Implement practical tasks to encourage student engagement in developing basic numeracy skills.
- Engage members of the school community in promoting the importance of numeracy skills in everyday life.

**School priority 3**

**Outcome for 2012–2014**

Increase the use of ICT as an effective tool for learning in all classrooms.

**2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:**
• Implementation of IPads within the classroom.
• Develop a number of notebook lessons in a variety of subject areas to encourage student engagement.
• Implement an ICT assessment within school programs.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
• ICT to be a specialised subject on the student’s timetable.
• IPads to be used across all Key Learning Areas.
• Explicitly teach ICT based language across the school community.
• Develop more digitalised multi-media based assessment tasks in ICT.
• The school will continue to identify and introduce ICT based Numeracy and Literacy programs to assist in students engaging with learning programs e.g. Study Ladder, Mathletics, Lexia and IPad programs.

School priority 4
Outcome for 2012–2014
Increase the capacity of teachers in utilizing the Quality Teaching Learning Framework in their teaching and assessment practice.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
• Staff will engage in professional learning related to establishing teaching and learning programs.
• Professional development of staff during learning support meetings.
• Incorporate elements of the quality teaching framework within teaching and learning program.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
• Develop an outcomes based student register for all students across all Key Learning Areas to be linked to their Personalised Learning Plans.
• Implement the Quality Teaching Framework in all curriculum areas.
• All new scheme teachers are assisted in achieving accreditation with the NSW Teachers Institute.
• Develop units of work that implement aspects of the ‘hidden curriculum’ to promote ‘formal curriculum’ outcomes.

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: