

2010 Annual School Report Ferencourt Public School

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way



Messages

Principal's message

In two-thousand and ten several capital works programs were completed at Ferncourt. Firstly the long awaited refurbishment of the student toilet blocks was completed. The Federal Government's "Building the Education Revolution" saw a new school hall and canteen completed ready for handover when school returned in 2011. Under "The Federal Government's other initiative "National Pride" renovations were carried out in the heritage listed administration block.

In our core business of teaching and learning we made great progress. Staff took part in professional learning in the teaching of mathematics and we continued to focus on literacy skills across the curriculum. We also reviewed our policy and programs for Gifted and Talented students, undertaking professional learning in identifying and planning for the education of these students.

Two thousand and ten was the year for our Gala Concert which was well received at two sold out performances at Marrickville Town Hall. Students also took part in many performing arts workshops at both district and regional levels.

Thank you to the staff, students and parents of Ferncourt for making 2010 such a productive and satisfying year. I look forward to working with you in 2011.

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.

Ruth Turnell, Principal

P & C and/or School Council message

Two-thousand and ten has been another busy, productive and fun-filled year for the Ferncourt Parents and Citizens Association (P&C). There are a large number of creative, dedicated and active parents and friends in the Ferncourt community who all help to enrich the educational experiences of the Ferncourt students.

The parent community continues to work closely with the Principal, Teachers and Administrative staff of Ferncourt. Funds have gone towards paying for electronic whiteboards, Mathletics (online) and the Bounce Back program. Musical instruments, creative art materials and plants for the amazing gardens including an eco-learning area were also contributed to through P&C funds.

The P&C is thrilled that we will soon have a new hall and canteen thanks to the Federal Government's Building Education Revolution. The P&C understands that one of the items on the Ferncourt 'wish list' for 2011 is to fit out our hall with good quality sound and lighting systems - a high priority for a school with so many students who love and excel in the performing arts.

It is fortunate we have had so many successful fundraisers this year and more planned for next year. This year's extravaganza was Fiesta which had over 150 parents happily wearing Hawaiian shirts and leis while being entertained by local Ferncourt talent. We also donned aprons for a Bunnings Warehouse BBQ's and Election Day. We had a cracker of a Halloween party complete with our very own graveyard. We have had golf days, daiquiris for sale, calendars, cards and numerous other fundraising events that continue to bring this small but strong community together.

The P&C continues to maintain its array of subcommittees and has even grown this year with the addition of Indonesian studies thanks to some of our resourceful parents being successful in securing a National Asian Languages and Studies Grant for 2011. Spanish classes are also to be offered for the first time next year at Ferncourt and will come under the Activities coordinator who also oversees our art, drama and play groups. Our uniform coordinator continues to keep uniform prices low.

The Education Committee is an important voice for all parents and their dedication to our Multi-lit program reinforces the inclusive nature of Ferncourt. The Ferncourt Band subcommittee

ensures that our training and performance bands are constantly challenged and on stage strutting their amazing stuff. Our recorder group continues to feed into the band. Our Environment Committee is working tirelessly as always to secure grants, beautify the grounds around our school hall, enhance the eco learning area (now even complete with our own bee hive) and create a grand entrance to our school befitting of the heritage listed main building.

We look forward to another great year working with the school, the larger community and our kids to enhance our wonderful school community.

Carolyn Smith and Trish Hellyer

Student representative's message

Two-thousand and ten was a busy year for the Ferncourt students and the members of the Student' Representative Council (SRC). In previous years, the SRC have met and come up with ways to raise funds for school projects, local, interstate and overseas charitable organisations. This year our major fundraising event was to support the Sydney Children's Hospital in Randwick.

This year the SRC have formed five sub-committees. These included; student welfare, communication, environment; sport and fundraising. With these committees, students are working more efficiently on ways we can improve the school.

The SRC were involved in working closely with Mr Pinazza and taking a closer look at our school song. They were involved in heavy discussions and debates about keeping and or changing our school's song.

The SRC started looking at students' roles and responsibilities within the school and discussed the term 'citizen'. This will be one of the SRC's priorities for 2011. They will continue to work on and publish a statement for the school, with input from the P&C, teachers and students.

In term 4, the SRC have been looking at additions and improvements to our school uniform and are working on ways to promote communication between the SRC, parents and students by starting their own website and email.

Ms Katarina Kordis and Ferncourt SRC

School context

Student information

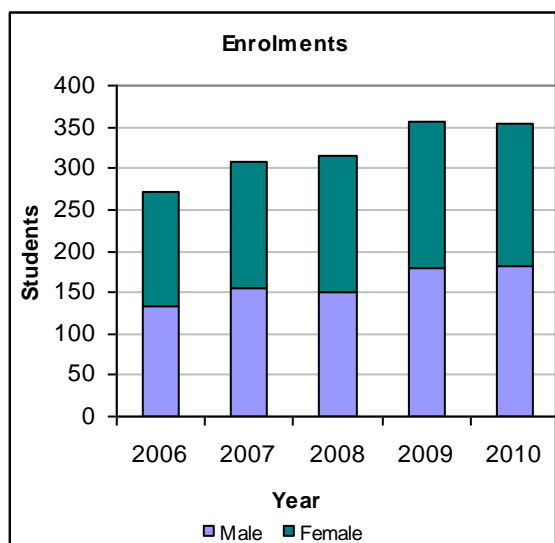
It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Student attendance profile

	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010
School	K			95.1	97.1
	1			96.0	96.1
	2			95.3	95.9
	3			95.7	95.9
	4			95.7	95.9
	5			96.0	95.9
	6			93.1	95.3
	Total	96.2	95.0	95.3	96.1
Region	K			95.4	95.8
	1			94.9	95.3
	2			95.1	95.5
	3			95.2	95.4
	4			95.1	95.6
	5			95.3	95.6
	6			94.5	94.8
	Total	95.0	95.2	93.7	95.4
State DET	K			94.3	94.7
	1			93.7	94.2
	2			94.0	94.4
	3			94.1	94.5
	4			94.0	94.5
	5			94.0	94.4
	6			93.6	94.0
	Total	94.0	94.1	92.1	94.4

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Male	133	154	151	179	181
Female	139	155	165	178	173

Student enrolment profile



Management of non-attendance

Students who are subject to absence from school are required to submit a letter outlining the nature of the absence. When an absence is unexplained, a letter is sent to the parent/caregiver requesting a reason for the absence.

For prolonged, regular and unexplained absences the Home School Liaison Officer works with the school, student and student's family to remedy the situation. An attendance improvement plan is implemented in order to assist the student in achieving greater school attendance.

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 2010 class size audit conducted on Wednesday 17 March 2010.

Roll Class	Year	Total per Year	Total in Class
5/6F	5	15	28
5/6F	6	13	28
5/6M	5	15	28
5/6M	6	13	28
5/6G	5	15	26
5/6G	6	11	26
3/4S	3	14	25
3/4S	4	11	25
3/4W	4	13	28

3/4W	3	15	28
3/4C	4	12	26
3/4C	3	14	26
3/4V	4	13	27
3/4V	3	14	27
2O	2	23	23
2S	2	22	22
1/2M	2	9	24
1/2M	1	15	24
1R	1	23	23
1W	1	24	24
KB	K	20	20
KA	K	20	20
KE	K	19	19

Staff information

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

Staff establishment

Position	Number
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	0
Assistant Principal(s)	3
Head Teachers	0
Classroom Teachers	15
Teacher of Emotional Disabilities	0
ESSP	0.4
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0.4
Support Teacher Learning Assistance	0.4
Teacher Librarian	0.8
Teacher of ESL	1
Counsellor	0.25
School Administrative & Support Staff	2.422
Total	24.272

Teacher qualifications

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

Qualifications	% of staff
Degree or Diploma	100 per cent
Postgraduate	25 per cent

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	30/11/2010
Income	\$
Balance brought forward	244,708.80
Global funds	167,992.94
Tied funds	62,104.93
School & community sources	
Interest	10,745.73
Trust receipts	8,188.05
Canteen	
Total income	<u>454,588.68</u>
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	39,914.29
Excursions	44,789.22
Extracurricular dissections	107,385.46
Library	5,282.61
Training & development	13,202.64
Tied funds	76,213.81
Casual relief teachers	40,628.38
Administration & office	80,366.38
School-operated canteen	
Utilities	23,712.53
Maintenance	30,824.41
Trust accounts	8,317.46
Capital programs	
Total expenditure	<u>470,637.19</u>
Balance carried forward	<u>228,660.29</u>

A full copy of the school's 2010 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 2010

Achievements

Ferntastics

The Ferntastics have had quite a year. In term one there was a change in leadership, with teacher Bonnie Kay taking the reigns. While this was her first time directing a choir she has had great fun and is learning more and more every week.

In addition to our weekly rehearsals, we have added several extra rehearsals due to our performances this year - these dedicated singers never complain about extra work and never shy away from a challenge. Performances this year have included: *Climate Club Launch, The Concordia Combined Community Choir, The Ferncourt Gala Concert, Carols at Marrickville Metro, and the Picnic Among Friends* community event.

While it will be sad to say goodbye to our very talented Year 6 members, it will be a pleasure welcome new singers joining us next year.

Bonnie Kay, Ferntastics Coordinator

Concert and Training Bands

The Ferncourt Band program has continued to grow with over 70 students now in the Concert and Training Bands. Two-thousand and ten was another successful year with both bands attending the Engadine Music Festival and gaining silver medals for their efforts. Performances were also given at the Gala Concert, Wilkins Public School Fair, Taverner's Hill Public School and Carols by Candlelight.

Selected members of the concert band attended a Combined Schools Music Camp, at The Tops Conference Centre, in October for two full days working closely with students from Summer Hill, Petersham and Wilkins Public Schools. Students rehearsed and performed a number of pieces as one large combined band and also within their ensemble groups. The results from the 100 piece band were truly amazing!

In addition, Ferncourt Concert Band has also been recognised as an exemplar model of a Concert Band by Earlwood Public School, who later in the year invited our Concert band to perform at their school with the view of starting their own Band Program. The students enjoyed showcasing their talents and instruments once again.

Viktoria Sen, Band Coordinator

Sport

In 2010 Ferncourt maintained its strong commitment to enhancing the lives and well-being of our students with a strong participation and focus on sport, healthy lifestyle and fitness within the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education programs.

Ferncourt students participated in swimming for Term 1 sport (Years 3-6), Primary Schools Sport Association (PSSA) – Soccer, Netball, OzTag and AusKick in Terms 2 and 3; and Cricket/Basketball and Indoor Soccer in Term 4. Students in K-2 participated in fitness, skills and team sports weekly throughout the year as well as AusKick (Years 1 and 2) in Term 4. During the year students from all stages took part in cricket workshops run by Cricket NSW with a view to elevating cricket to PSSA level at the school.

All students (K-6) participated in weekly Gymnastics sessions for 30 minutes per week. In addition, beginning swimmers from Stages 2 and 3 attended two weeks of intensive swimming lessons during the latter part of the year. Ferncourt is committed to providing every opportunity for students to become competent swimmers.

Ferncourt students represented the school in District and Regional Athletics, District and Regional Swimming and Cross Country, Soccer, Rugby League, OzTag, Australian Rules Football and AusKick, at school and on weekends. The school supports the efforts of sporting clubs such as Newtown Swans (AFL), Red Devils (Soccer), Marrickville and Newtown juniors (Rugby League), local cricket and netball clubs while offering these sports.

Throughout the year Stage 3 students participated in the Sydney Swans Healthy Choices program. Stage 2 students took part in an eight

week course of Dance2Bfit, while students were once again encouraged to join the highly successful Active Kids program run by Ms Kordis and Ms Oliver.

Through the acquisition of grant funds the school has been able to purchase much-needed sporting equipment. This supports our goal of providing opportunities for students to strive to be fit, healthy and competent sportspeople and citizens. Our success is contingent on the support of parents, teachers and students who continue their involvement.

Mathew McPherson, Sport Coordinator

Academic

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

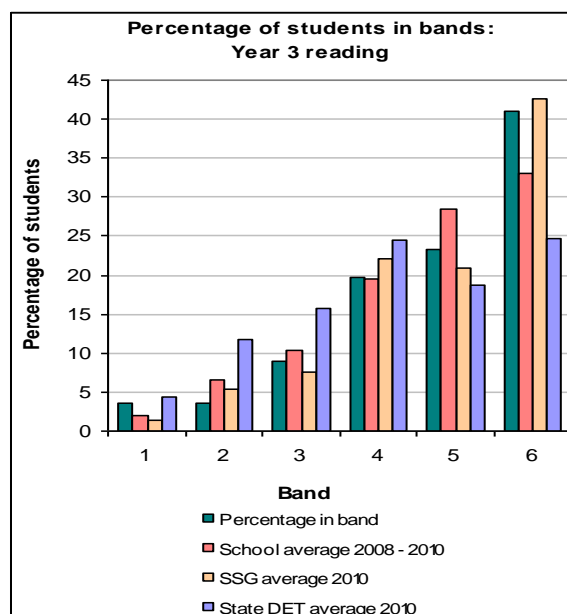
The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

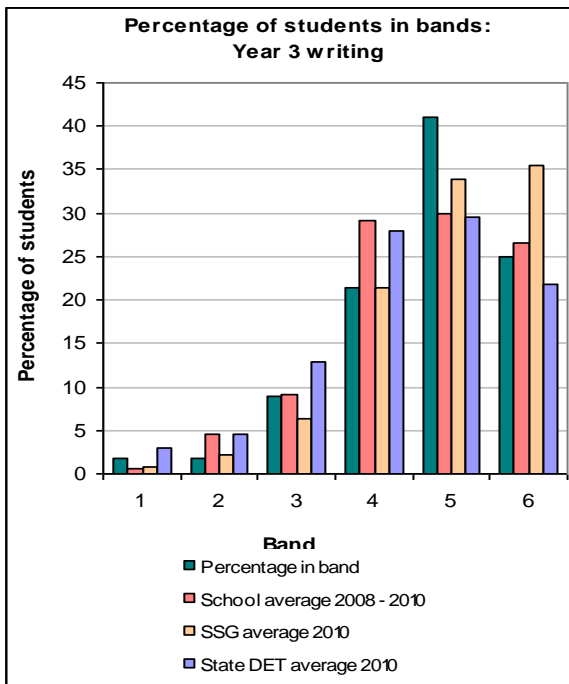
Yr 3: from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest for Year 3)

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

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3

In the NAPLAN tests in May 2010 students were tested in all areas of Literacy – Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. Year 3 students consistently achieved above or at state average across all NAPLAN test subjects.

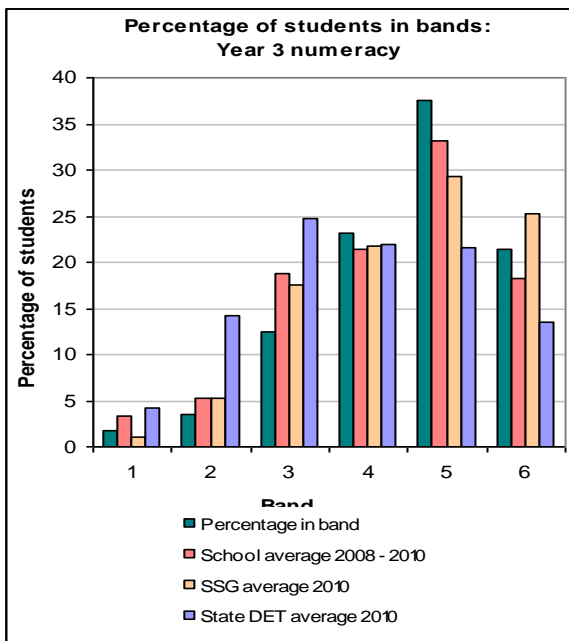




In Writing, results showed 88 per cent of students in bands 4, 5 and 6 and on average above State DET average in these bands.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3

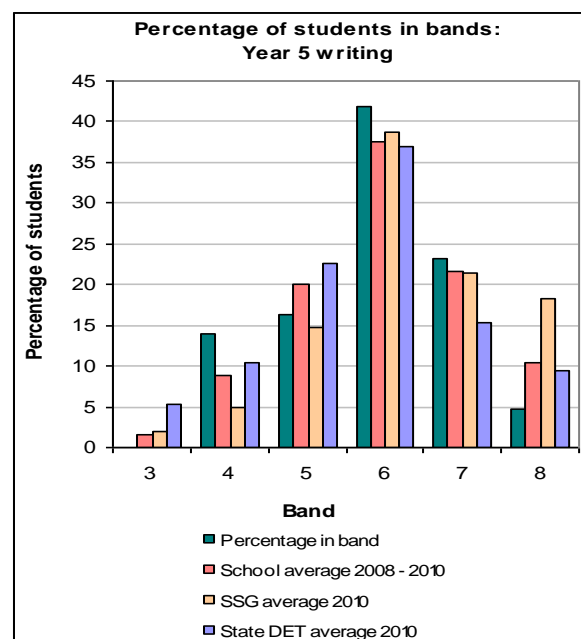
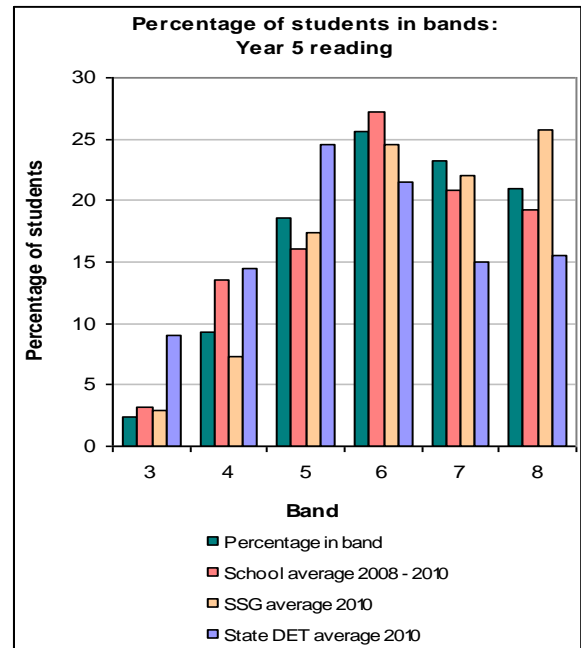
In the NAPLAN tests in May 2010 students were tested in numeracy. In Year 3 in Numeracy the overall performance was above state average in bands 4, 5 and 6.



Scores in Numeracy were significantly higher when compared with like schools, 3-year school average and state average in bands 4, 5 and 6.

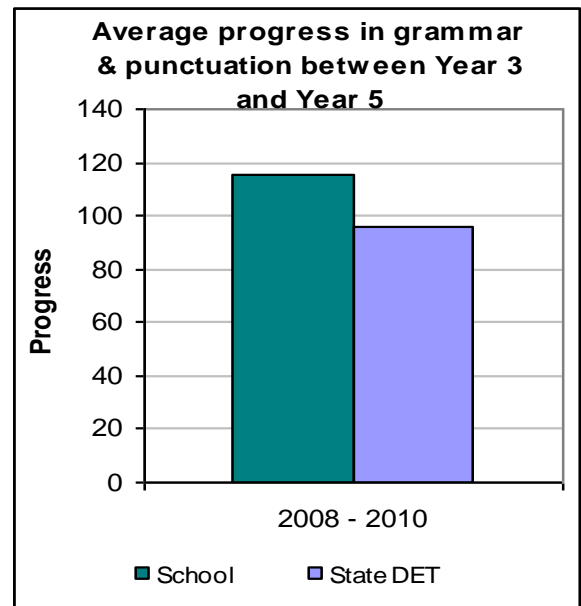
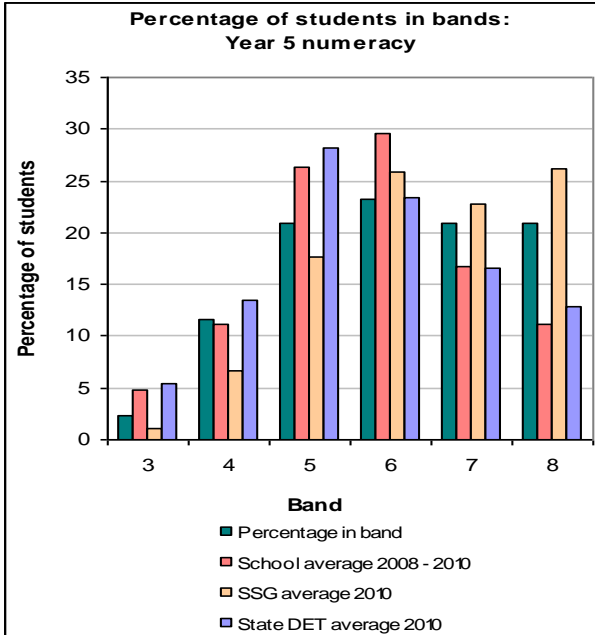
Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5

In the NAPLAN tests in May students were tested in all areas of Literacy – Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. The overall performance of Year 5 students was above the state average in bands 7 and 8.



Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5

In the NAPLAN tests in May 2010 students were tested in numeracy. In Numeracy Year 5 students were equal to or above state average in Bands 6, 7 and 8.

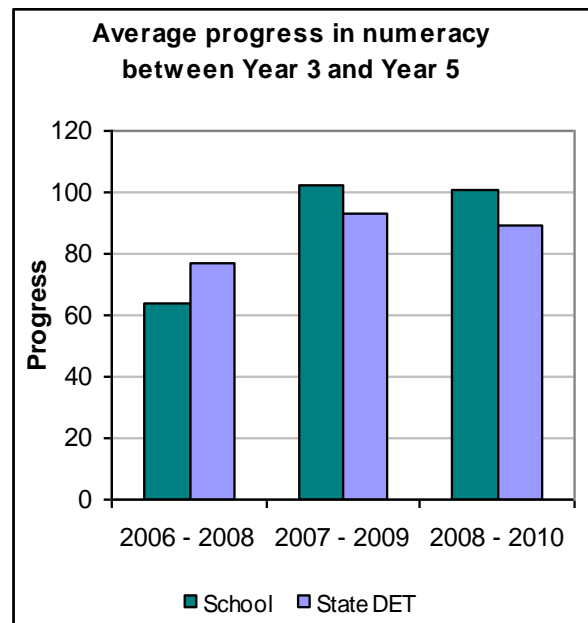
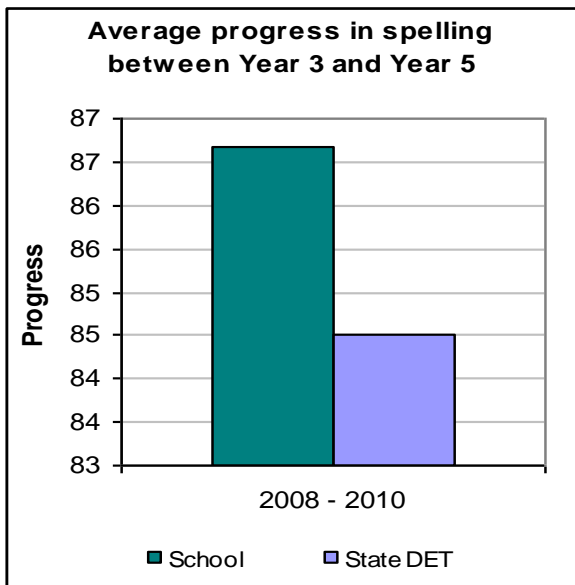


Progress in numeracy

The average progress from Year 3 and Year 5 in Numeracy reveals excellent improvement in results above that of state average in the period 2007 to 2010.

Progress in literacy

The average progress from Year 3 and Year 5 in Literacy – spelling, and grammar and punctuation (see below and above) reveals very good results above that of state average.



Minimum standards

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum standards for reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, spelling and numeracy for years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

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

Percentage of Year 3 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2010

Percentage of Year 3 students achieving at or above minimum standard	
Reading	96
Writing	98
Spelling	98
Punctuation and grammar	98
Numeracy	98

Percentage of Year 5 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2010

Percentage of Year 5 students achieving at or above minimum standard	
Reading	98
Writing	100
Spelling	98
Punctuation and grammar	95
Numeracy	98

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

Support programs for Aboriginal students are provided on the basis of individual need, in addition to whole school programs relating to indigenous culture. These programs include:

- individual and group learning programs in literacy and numeracy for Aboriginal students
- group programs centred on the teaching and learning of Aboriginal culture and stories

- the integration of Aboriginal content and perspective across the curriculum through the use of digital media, animation, film, documentaries and the visual arts
- a whole-school approach to learning about Indigenous Australian history and culture through the delivery of the curriculum, in addition to the celebration of NAIDOC week, Sorry Day and other relevant events throughout the year
- Consistent acknowledgement of Country and the Traditional owners during assemblies and special occasions
- Continuation of an after school homework club run by teachers for Indigenous students.

Multicultural education

Multicultural perspectives are integrated across the curriculum to ensure an inclusive school community and racism-free learning and working environment.

We continue to celebrate diversity through recognition of culture at special occasions such as Harmony Day and NAIDOC week.

Teachers, trained in English as a Second Language (ESL), continue to support students for whom English is a second language. Students are supported both in the classroom and small withdrawal groups.

The school's Anti-Racism Contact Officer, Ms Kay, attends training and network meetings to assist in maintaining current knowledge of Anti-Racism policy.

The role of the Anti-Racism Officer is to counsel students about racial behaviour when necessary and to monitor and implement the school's anti-racism practices.

Respect and responsibility

Programs designed to instil respect, responsibility and a sense of community within our students, include:

- The Buddies program as part of the Kindergarten orientation and transition
- External leadership programs and involvement in local government initiatives to maintain awareness of local and wider community issues
- Continued participation in the ethics program for Stage 3 students
- Integration of values education that instils a shared vision of respect and responsibility at both school and local community level.
- Bounce Back, implemented in 2008, continues to enhance and underpin the core values central to a coherent and productive society. The key concepts covered within the program are courage, seeing the bright side of life, emotions, relationships, humour, and anti-bullying.

Gifted and Talented education

In 2010 Ferncourt developed and implemented a new Gifted and Talented (GAT) Policy focusing on identification of GAT students across the school, programming and keeping our parent community informed.

In 2010 all staff took part in professional development to improve their understanding of the school Gifted and Talented Policy and learnt practical ways to create programs that respond effectively to the needs of these students in the classroom.

A Gifted and Talented Register has been created to ensure identified students are being catered for and are offered experiences relevant to their particular area of strength/s.

Enrichment opportunities have been provided through participation in:

- Operation Art
- Sydney Region Drama camp
- Sydney Region Dance festival
- Create East

We also offer ongoing activities that help to extend and enrich our students such as:

- Band
- Choir
- Public speaking
- Debating
- Dance

In Term 4 the gifted and talented education committee created a resource page on the school website to inform parents of past and upcoming activities for GAT students and provide resources for families and teachers. The committee also made a presentation to the parent community to inform them of what Ferncourt has done with regards to gifted and talented education and our direction for the future.

Victoria Caines, Gifted and Talented Coordinator

Active Kids

Ferncourt Public School has been successful in receiving a grant to be involved in the Australian Sports Commission's Active After-School Communities (AASC) program.

The after-school program offered fun, safe and inclusive structured physical activities, which provided children with the opportunity to develop essential motor skills and an enthusiasm for being active. The program runs from 3:30pm - 4:30pm. Places were limited with a maximum of 35 students per session. Students also provided fruit to be shared during the session.

During terms 1 and 2 the program was offered two afternoons a week. Activities included were modified sports, martial arts, skipping and Frisbee. During terms 3 and 4 students were involved in rugby league, soccer, athletics and hip-hop. The funding for terms 3 and 4 had increased and the program was offered three afternoons a week.

AASC will continue in 2011 with a wide range of activities including; badminton, basketball and yoga just to name a few.

Ms Katarina Kordis

Public Speaking and Debating

This year Ferncourt achieved excellent results in both Public Speaking and Debating. In June, under the wonderful coaching of Ms Keane and organization by Ms Francis, four Ferncourt students competed in the Multicultural Perspectives Public Speaking District Competition. Resulting in Lily (year 4) being the winner of the Stage 2 section, where she went on to represent our District at the Regional Competition six weeks later. She did an outstanding job but unfortunately failed to place on this occasion. I am sure she'll improve upon that result in 2011. Well done to our four representatives who all were stars on the day.

During 2010 we had two teams who successfully competed in the Premier's Debating Challenge, achieving Ferncourt's best result to date in this competition. Both teams did an excellent job and notched up several wins enabling Ferncourt to tie with Stanmore Public School in our zone. Well done to all those involved in debating and public speaking this year.

Colleen Mahoney, 2010 Debating Coordinator

Progress on 2010 targets

Target 1

Numeracy

Our target is to improve the educational outcomes for students in Numeracy in the lower bands.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Analysis of the 2009 NAPLAN and School based numeracy assessment data to identify areas of student need by subject area. Using this analysis to set individual goals.

- Continuing to differentiate the curriculum to meet the individual needs of students.
- Implementing the revised scope and sequence for Numeracy from K-6.
- Continued focus on providing professional development for staff in the teaching of mathematics including the use of technology as a teaching tool.
- Purchasing additional Numeracy resources to support the programs where appropriate.

Our success can be measured by:

- 85 per cent of K-6 students achieving stage outcomes (reporting descriptor Sound) in Numeracy
- 10 per cent or higher working beyond stage outcomes (High or Outstanding) in Numeracy.

Target 2

Literacy

Our target was to improve educational outcomes for students in Literacy.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Analysis of the 2009 NAPLAN and School Based Numeracy Assessment data and setting individual goals based on NAPLAN results
- Differentiating the curriculum to meet the individual needs of students.
- Continued focus on staff development in the teaching of literacy, in particular using technology to motivate and encourage student learning.
- Purchasing additional literacy resources to support literacy programs for all stages.

Our success can be measured by:

- A continuation of 90 per cent of K-6 students achieving stage outcomes (reporting descriptor Sound) in Literacy.
- A continuation of 25 per cent or higher working beyond stage outcomes (High or Outstanding) in Literacy.

Target 3

Gifted & Talented students

Our target was to improve the opportunities available to gifted and talented students.

Strategies to achieve this target included:

- Implementation of a Gifted & Talented policy.
- Implementation of a gifted & talented committee to oversee policy and curriculum.
- Staff Development workshops in the identification of gifted & talented students (including those students with potential).
- Continuation or establishment of withdrawal and in-class groups in the areas of public speaking, debating, maths groups *et al.*

Our achievements can be measured by:

- The identification of students who meet the published criteria for inclusion in Gifted & Talented programs but who have not previously been included.
- The development of a Gifted and Talented register.
- The development of Individual Plans for identified students.
- A measurable improvement in outcomes by students in the area of their gift or talent.

Target 4

Technology

Our target in Technology was to continue to expand student knowledge about, and use of, technology.

Strategies to achieve this target included:

- An extra ten Interactive Whiteboards have been installed. There are now boards in all classrooms and the Library.
- All staff members have now received training in the use of Interactive Whiteboards.
- A second teacher has taken on the role of IT Coordinator to ensure the support for staff in all aspects of technology in the classroom.
- Students have been trained in the use of the Interactive Whiteboards.

Our achievements can be measured by:

- Interactive whiteboards installed in all classrooms.

- Staff displaying competence in using interactive whiteboards and a range of software applications to enhance teaching and learning.
- Students are competent in using interactive whiteboards and a range of related software applications
- Students are meaningfully engaged in the use of interactive whiteboards as part of curriculum delivery

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.

Over the years we have received feedback from parents and caregivers that at times they are unable to answer some survey questions. We appreciate and acknowledge this fact and thank all parents and caregivers for returning surveys both complete and incomplete. The opinions and continued support of our parents and caregivers is a vital part of our annual cycle of evaluations.

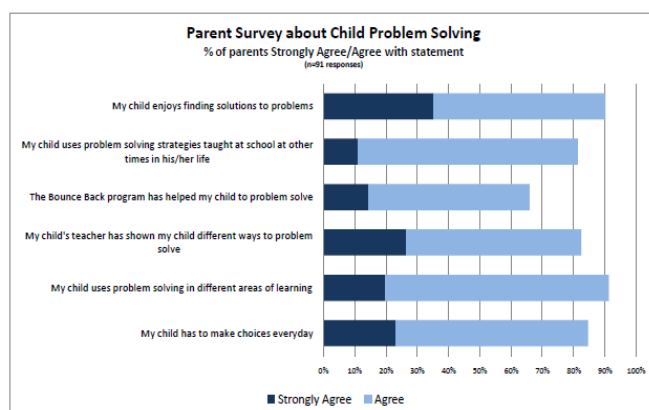
In 2010 our school carried out evaluations of Child Problem Solving, Learning and School Management.

Child Problem Solving

It is widely believed that an individual's ability to problem solve will be one of the major pre-requisites for employment in our children's lifetime.

Background

A total of 91 parents and caregivers responded to the survey. The graph below shows an average strong agreement or agreement for all questions at 82.3 per cent.



Findings and conclusions

Teaching problem solving across all areas of the curriculum is a major focus at Ferncourt. To this end the school will continue to work hard in this area as it is such an important skill for children. On the whole parents and caregivers who responded to the survey supported how we teach problem solving across the curriculum and how effectively we implement complimentary problem solving and resilience teaching programs in the school.

Future directions

The explicit teaching of resilience and problem solving through Bounce Back and across all curriculum areas will remain our primary focus in the long term. School welfare and discipline programs will be monitored in order to keep pace with shifting and constantly evolving changes in how children communicate (Social Media), traverse inter-personal relationships at school and home, and relate and react to an ever-changing world. This will be realised by staff through professional development and understanding the world from a child's perspective.

School Management

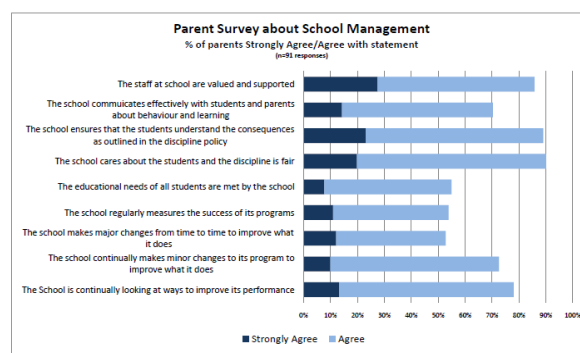
School management covers a wide range of important areas crucial to the effective running of the school. Communication between schools and families is a cornerstone for effective management. The school management survey covers the following areas:

- Staff at school are valued and supported
- The school communicates information about behaviour, learning and discipline policies
- Students are cared for at school
- Students' educational needs are met
- How the success of programs are measured
- How the school makes minor and major changes
- How the school continually looks for ways to improve performance

Background

A total of 91 parents and caregivers responded to the survey. It must be noted that some

parents/caregivers were unable to accurately respond to some survey questions. The reason could be that essentially not all survey questions are able to be answered from an informed perspective. It is not uncommon that this can be the case. The expectation from the school's perspective is that parents and caregivers only answer statements where an opinion is formed. The school acknowledges that not all statements will be answered, nor is there an expectation that all parents and caregivers should have an opinion. In the first instance the Executive staff at Ferncourt should be consulted should a parent or caregiver have any questions relating to surveys. Executive staff members are more than willing to confidentially answer or clarify questions from the school community.



Findings and Conclusions

Overall the response was very good in the areas concerning child welfare, care and discipline. In the area of student's educational needs being met the score for Strongly Agree/Agree was around 55 per cent. To the statement that the school regularly measures the success of its programs, 47 per cent of respondents disagreed. To the statement the school makes major changes from time to time to improve what it does, 48 per cent of respondents disagreed.

Future directions

The clear messages from this survey is twofold: the school needs to communicate clearly in terms of how the needs of individual students are being met, as the school and its teachers work very hard to realize this objective.

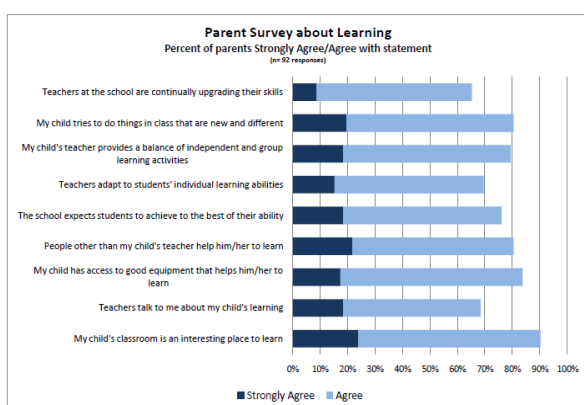
In addition, the school should communicate clearly when and how success is measured or define what it is that parents and caregivers don't understand about this concept. This area should be targeted in the next round of surveys with a clearer idea of what 'success' is. To the statement

regarding the school's capacity for performing major change, a clearer understanding of what constitutes 'major change' and how it is reported to parents/caregivers should be more transparent.

Student Learning

Student learning is at the core of education and for this reason constitutes much of the school's day to day focus and planning. The survey focussed on the following areas:

- Teachers at the school are continually upgrading their skills
- My child tries to do things in class that are new and different
- My child's teacher provides a balance of independent and group learning activities
- Teachers adapt to students' individual learning abilities
- The school expects students to achieve to the best of their ability
- People other than my child's teacher help him/her to learn
- My child has access to good equipment that helps him/her to learn
- Teachers talk to me about my child's learning
- My child's classroom is an interesting place to learn



Background

In this survey 92 parents and caregivers responded. For the most part feedback in this survey was very positive for the reason we understand to be that this is where communication between students and their

parents/caregivers is most fluid and readily understood. For this reason there appears to be a greater understanding of what the statements mean and the tendency for respondents to clearly form an informed opinion.

Findings and Conclusions

There are three statements that require comment as they constitute the lowest Strongly Agree/Agree scores.

- Teachers at the school are continually upgrading their skills

This statement falls into the category that professional development opportunities for staff are not readily or consistently communicated to parents and caregivers. The professional development of school staff is an important focus at Ferncourt. Yearly, much time and finances are directed into this valuable and important resource. Each year staff undertakes five mandatory professional development days, in addition to up to 5-10 additional days per year as well as 90 minutes per week of meetings, seminars, and curriculum support and development workshops. Beginning teachers also undertake extra professional development under the New Teacher Scheme and nearly 25 per cent of staff is currently completing a Post Graduate course in addition to full time teaching.

- Teachers adapt to students' individual learning abilities

At Ferncourt we have long prided ourselves on how well we cater for students with learning difficulties or special needs. That is not to say that we only focus on these children. Much time and effort is focussed on enhancing the learning outcomes for all students. We worked from a whole child approach that endeavours to meet the needs of the individual. This allows the school to develop individual programs for students across all learning abilities.

- Teachers talk to me about my child's learning

This continues to be a perplexing and puzzling statement - one that perennially scores low despite evidence that teachers do talk to parents/caregivers about their children. It is a statement response that alarms and concerns teachers. At Ferncourt we spend or potentially spend much time on feedback to parents/caregivers both formally and informally.

At Ferncourt we offer the mid year parent/teacher interview, reporting (mid and end of year), newsletters, parent workshops (e.g. numeracy and literacy), respond to emails and phone calls and undertake formal and informal appointments. It is a requirement that school staff make time to personally meet or talk with parents and caregivers at mutually convenient times.

Future directions

As outlined previously it is apparent that the school needs to explicitly inform parents and caregivers about the areas of concern outlined in this section.

Professional learning

Staff at Ferncourt Public School participated in a wide range of professional learning activities throughout 2010. These activities were linked to the core school targets and sought to contribute to improvements in teaching and learning.

Significant professional learning programs included:

- Best Start – DET project implemented by kindergarten teachers in order to gather data to inform the programming of teaching and learning programs for kindergarten students.
- Mandatory OHS training in resuscitation, use of Epipen etc
- Teachers from all stages undertook initial and further training in the use of electronic white boards.
- Stage 2 and 3 teachers participated in various programs run by Observatory Hill in the areas of science and technology, conservation and sustainability.
- NSW Institute of Teachers Accreditation program for early career teachers.
- Attendance by staff at Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) workshops and regional information meetings.

School development 2009 – 2011

Targets for 2011

Target 1

Numeracy

Our target is to continue to improve on educational outcomes for students in Numeracy.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Implement a parent-tutoring program that supports students who are identified as experiencing difficulties in Numeracy
- Continue to teach problem solving strategies as a means of fostering analytical thinking across K-6
- Continue to analyse 2010 NAPLAN and school based Numeracy assessment data to identify areas of need in the different strands of Numeracy. Using this analysis to refine teaching methods for problematic areas
- Continue to differentiate the curriculum to meet the needs of students
- Implement and provide professional support for K-2 staff to use the Numeracy Continuum to better plan and deliver differentiated lessons of mathematics in the classroom.

Our success will be measured by:

- 85 per cent of K-6 students achieving stage outcomes (reporting descriptor Sound) in Numeracy
- 15 per cent or higher working beyond stage outcomes (High or Outstanding) in Numeracy.

Target 2

Literacy

Our target is to continue to improve on educational outcomes for students in Literacy, specifically reading.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Analysis of the 2010 NAPLAN and School Based Literacy Assessment data and setting individual goals based on NAPLAN results

- Differentiating the curriculum to meet the individual needs of students
- Continued focus on staff development in the teaching of literacy, in particular whole school participation in Focus on Reading (FOR – Year 3-6) and Comprehension Reading and Vocabulary Enrichment (CRAVE – K-2)
- Teachers collaboratively share reading work samples and strategies to improve students educational outcomes in reading
- Purchasing additional literacy resources to support literacy programs for all stages.

Our success will be measured by:

- 85 per cent of students reading at benchmark level or above (reporting descriptor Sound)
- 90 per cent of Year 3 and 5 students attaining level 6, 7 and 8 in reading in NAPLAN

Target 3

Nutrition and Physical Activity

Our target is to improve the nutrition and level of physical activity of students through the introduction of the *Live Life Well @ School* program.

Strategies to improve this target include:

- Implementation of a nutrition policy
- Introduction of the *Crunch n Sip* program
- Staff development workshops focusing on Fundamental Movement Skills
- Newsletter snippets and other information leaflets provided to educate the community about nutrition and physical activity
- Reviewing canteen nutritional guidelines.

Our success will be measured by:

- Staff members monitoring changes in the amount of fruit and vegetables and water consumed each day
- Staff members tracking students' development in Fundamental Movement Skills

- Observing changes in student engagement in physical activity at lunchtimes
- Monitoring any changes made to canteen guidelines.

Target 4

Communication

To improve communication with the Ferncourt community about the teaching and learning programs being implemented at the school.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Evaluation and publication of current sources of information regarding teaching and learning
- Publication of staff Professional Learning opportunities
- Design of surveys specifically meeting the needs of the school
- Involvement of parent representatives in planning effective communication in teaching and learning at Ferncourt
- Review of professional learning income and expenditure and its alignment to school targets
- Acknowledgment by the school community of professional learning courses undertaken by staff.

Our success will be measured by:

- Increased funding allocated to professional learning
- Positive community response to annual survey.

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.

Ruth Turnell, Principal

Mathew McPherson, Assistant Principal

Victoria Caines, Assistant Principal

Beverley Neate, SAS

Rowena Stewart

Maree Oliver

Christine Bain

School contact information

Ferncourt Public School

74 Premier Street Marrickville NSW 2204

Phone: 612 9558 3978

Fax: 612 9559 3268

Email: Ferncourt-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

Web: www.ferncourt-p.schools.nsw.edu.au

School Code: 5114

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:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/asr>