Minerva School
ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT
2011
Our school at a glance

Minerva school is a school for specific purposes for students in years 3-12. Our school motto “Making the student with special needs a successful part of the community” underpins our daily programs as we endeavour to do just that, prepare the student for life within the community.

Every student at Minerva has individual learning needs. We provide varied teaching and learning experiences so that each child may reach their full potential. The use of alternate activities and programs to enhance engagement has seen positive outcomes for the students.

Work experience, integration, interschool sport and a new sensory garden are some of the ways in which we motivate our students whilst they attend to the Board of Studies K-6 and Life Skills syllabus.

We have strong links to the community through our association with rotary and the parent community. It is through these relationships that we are able to expand the resources we have so as to support the key learning areas.

Messages

Principal’s message

This report provides our whole school community with a range of information and data on school achievement, initiatives and evaluations for the 2011 school year. It also reports on student achievement in a range of areas.

The 2011 school year has been an extremely energetic and rewarding year for both students and staff. We saw the refurbishment of playground areas and significant building works completed throughout the year. As a result, the school now has a new library and Information Communication Technology Centre with an adjoining playground and sensory garden. On the western side of the school, a previously disused area, was extensively landscaped to include a sensory garden. A sensory quiet learning area was built, being attached to a classroom with direct access to the playground and Merton St.

There was significant growth for our school in terms of academic and vocational student achievement, curriculum development and delivery, student leadership and successful transition to work programs.

Our school continues to be recognised in the community as one with a good reputation for high standards and expectations. The staff works hard to instil in our student body a love of lifelong learning, appropriate choice making skills, and students who strive to become successful lifelong members of their community. Our achievements have been supported by various organisations within our local community. Como-Jannali Rotary, Sutherland Rotary, Miranda RSL Sub Branch and Minerva 2 Melbourne fundraising initiative by teacher Geoff Tunks. On behalf of the school community I would like to sincerely thank and acknowledge these organisations for their ongoing support.

Lastly but by no means least, I would like to thank and acknowledge our school’s Parents and Citizens Association. Their time and support of our school and our students is absolutely invaluable.

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

Fiona Young
Principal
P & C and/or School Council message

The P & C had a very productive year and wish to thank the committee for their commitment and energy. A supportive, co-operative relationship with school staff and Principal Fiona Young jointly achieved improvements supporting the wellbeing of our students.

In 2011 the P & C built on previous traditions and committed to involving Minerva families and the wider community supporting fundraising initiatives, providing donations, events and family enjoyment. The focus was on the students having fun where possible, linking such activities to educational and social outcomes.

Parents and carers showed generous support in providing gifts to fill Easter baskets and Christmas stockings. More than 20 local businesses generously donated goods for Mother’s and Father’s Day raffles, Hot Dog special lunch and catering for Open Night.

The P & C purchased a range of affordable gifts for Mother’s and Father’s Day stalls, set up in the school hall to replicate a shop setting where students were given the opportunity to personally select and buy a gift for their parents or carers. School Prefects had the responsibility of assisting students with money transactions. Prior to the stalls, students practiced their shopping skills, aided by visual supports displaying items for sale. This assisted all students in making independent selection of items.

A survey of parents conducted in May, highlighted areas where the P & C could improve opportunities for communication and social networking within the school and beyond including:

- Coffee Mornings
- Parent Liaison Officers role to begin 2012

- SRC Special Lunch (hot dog and movies)
- Halloween Lolly Bags
- Improvement in website design (eg private blogs for our school community)
- Cost benefit of Harbour cruise
- Preliminary planning for a golf day

P & C also supported the need to involve and network families, providing support, particularly to new families to help develop a sense of belonging. This included Mr Geoff’s send off on his Minerva to Melbourne bike ride journey and the BBQ at Gunnamatta Bay – organised by the Cartwright family.

The P & C also supported previous initiatives and paid for:

- A new School Sign
- Sensory Garden (matching Mr Geoff’s fundraising donation)
- Year 12 Jerseys and Formal tickets
- School Trophies

The P & C and the broader school community have worked hard at promoting community involvement in collecting 27,000 Coles vouchers and 13,000 Woolworths points. Amounts this year exceeded our expectations. Thanks to Deb Hunt and Chris Farrell for their hard work in coordinating these competitions for Minerva. Sports equipment and readers to assist our non-verbal children will, as a result be added to the schools’ resources.

A special thank you to our Treasurer Anne Johnson, who is retiring from her position at the end of 2011, after many years of service. Anne’s efforts in supporting P & C initiatives have been appreciated by all Minerva families.

Good Luck to all Year 12 leavers as they transition into the next phase of their life journey.

Thank you to our dedicated staff that make a huge difference to our children’s lives.

We appreciate the financial support of all our activities by families and carers and their good wishes throughout the year.

Peter and Christine Damcevski

P & C Presidents
School context

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

Student enrolment profile
Minerva SSP provides an education for students with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbance, autism and challenging behaviours.

A table of our school's enrolment profile over the last five years is displayed immediately below. 57 students were enrolled at Minerva in 2011. The maximum enrolment is 63 due to the high support needs of our students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

Management of non-attendance
Student non-attendance is managed by:

- Teachers recording absences in class rolls and by contacting parents/carers by phone and communication books for explanations when not provided.
- School developed notification forms requesting explanation for absences.
- Class Roll audits by DEC staff

Structure of classes
We had 9 classes operating in 2011. Each class is staffed by one teacher and one school learning support officer (SLSO). We have graded reading and spelling groups operating across the school three mornings a week. The formation of 2 high support classes established in 2007 continued in 2011.

Retention to Year 12
Retention of students from Year 10 to Year 12 was 80%. Students in Year 11 and 12 study Board of Studies Life Skills subjects and are awarded the Higher School Certificate.
Post-school destinations

Post school options discussion begin as soon as possible in the child’s schooling so as to map the path they are likely to travel once formal schooling ceases.

During year 12 each student’s transition, to a post school environment, is supported throughout the year and this is supplemented by the EXPO that is held in our school hall.

We had 8 students in the graduating class of 2011. Of the 8, three began a transition to work program and four began a community participation program coordinated by ADHC. One student enrolled in retail at St George TAFE and one student gained employment in a nursing home.

Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

TAFE courses are a rich source of learning for some Minerva students. These courses give students the opportunity to learn practical skills in a tertiary environment. TVET courses are part of their HSC credentials.

Three Year 12 students (38% of Year 12) undertook the 2nd year of the Retail TVET (discrete) course at Gymea TAFE College.

One year 12 student won the 2011 VET Excellence Award which recognises and acknowledges outstanding commitment and achievement for students participating in the Workplace Learning Program. One Year 11 student undertook the 1st Year of the Retail TVET (discrete) course at Gymea TAFE College. One Year 11 student undertook the one year Automotive Studies course at Kogarah TAFE.

Students also participated in the mandatory Retail and Automotive work placements throughout the year as a practical component to support their course outcomes.

Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification

In 2011 100% of Year 12 students attained the HSC.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Careers Advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher RFF</td>
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<td>Counsellor</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>11.304</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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The National Education Agreement requires schools to report on Indigenous composition of their workforce.

Minerva School does not currently comprise of any members of staff who are from an Indigenous background.

Staff retention

During 2011 two permanent classroom teachers were appointed on the basis of merit at interview.

In term 3 an Assistant Principal transferred from another DEC school and this filled all of our vacant staff positions.

All permanent teachers were retained in 2011 until the end of term 4 when one teacher and one SLSO (school learning support officer) were transferred to other school settings, effective term 1 2012. This is not reflected in the number of staff as indicated in the above staff establishment.

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meets the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools. All full and part-time teachers have either a Degree or Diploma in Education. Teachers are encouraged to undertake further training to enhance professional development.
Jenny Marshall was awarded a graduate certificate in Teacher Librarianship. Jenny was appointed the position of teacher librarian at the end of 2010. To undertake this position she received the opportunity to participate in a NSW DET retraining program. This required one year of long distance study at Charles Sturt University.

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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<td>Tied funds</td>
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<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
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<td>Canteen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
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<tr>
<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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<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
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<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
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<td>Maintenance</td>
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<td>Capital programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total expenditure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance carried forward</td>
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A full copy of the school’s 2011 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 2011
In 2011 our school has remained consistent with previous years having very high levels of performance demonstrated by students. The curriculum and extra-curricular activities provided were carefully selected to meet individual needs ensuring that students accessed and participated in a broad range of artistic and sporting activities which would be immediately comparable to mainstream schools.

Achievements
Academic
All Minerva students have an Individual Learning Support Plan jointly developed with class teacher and parent/carers and relevant personnel.

This individualized plan supports students in achieving their personal potential.

All students attending Minerva School follow a special program of study. Those in Years 7 to 12 follow the Board of Studies Life Skills curriculum.

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.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 7
Minerva school supported parent requests, whereby One Year 7 student attempted the Literacy – Year 7 NAPLAN

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 7
Minerva school supported parent requests, whereby One Year 7 student attempted the Numeracy – Year 7 NAPLAN

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 9
Minerva school supported parent requests, whereby One Year 9 student attempted the Literacy – Year 9 NAPLAN

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 9
Minerva school supported parent requests, whereby One Year 9 student attempted the Numeracy – Year 9 NAPLAN

Progress in literacy
Testing of students indicated that 33% of the student population had increased their spelling age by one full year.
School Certificate

In 2011 there were no Year 10 students enrolled.

Higher School Certificate

For students to successfully qualify for the higher school certificate students must engage in a program of Life Skills courses that meet the Board of Studies requirements for a “Special Program of Study”. Course objectives, outcomes and content are selected to provide an individualized transition planning process for the student.

Eight students successfully completed their Year 12 studies and were awarded a Higher School Certificate.

Arts

The Dramatic Arts

Minerva School fosters an active involvement in creative and practical art activities. In 2011, the senior reading class were involved in a Dramatic Arts unit which required that each student learn and rehearse a script as part of their weekly literacy lessons. The students had the opportunity to showcase their hard work and talents by performing the play ‘Cinderella the twisted fairy tale’ to the wider school community during our annual open night.

The students were involved in all aspects of the production from designing costumes to organising their own props for the set. Their performance was a wonderful learning experience and providing them with the opportunity to receive positive feedback for their hard work and commitment.

School Band

At the core of Minerva School’s music program a fundamental premise that “Every child experiences music, therefore every child is musical.”

With this in mind we continue to form musical experiences from the ground up that firstly fosters an awakening of our students’ natural abilities. We then seek to harness and further develop these abilities. We find, write and tailor musical parts and roles that are specific to the individual child. This allows us to be wholly inclusive and makes for wonderful, collaborative, confident and joyous musical experiences for each child involved.

In 2011 our first band performance involved twelve students representing 22% of the school population. The students enthusiastically worked together with parts that were tailored to each student, free from failure and allowing for further development of skills.

Our students successfully performed at our school Open Night. The band later performed for a recording that was uploaded to the Generation One Website. This performance can also be found on the YouTube website by searching Minerva School Band/ Hands Across Australia. This video performance was chosen to be featured on large screens at the 2011 Schools Spectacular in a segment called Australia’s Biggest Classroom. A largely different band was later formed to perform for our Presentation Day.

Our success can no better be expressed than by the words of two parents who wrote:

“We thoroughly enjoyed the band, and of course Chris’ singing” “We don’t know how you did it. Thanks !!! It was the best night of our life.”
**Sport**

Sport is also used to reinforce the PDHPE curriculum and promote healthy eating and student wellbeing. All students are encouraged to participate in a variety of sporting and fitness activities.

This year Minerva School was again successful in receiving the Active After School Commission (AASC) grant money to fund a variety of free fitness programs for our students. These programs supported the class PE programs. The sporting activities that our students were involved in this year included karate, basketball, touch football, Oz tag, swimming, sailing and surf awareness.

A small selection of Minerva students also benefitted from their involvement in the Department of Education and Training School Swimming Scheme. This is an intensive learn to swim program that develops water confidence and provides students with basic skills in water safety and survival. It was conducted over ten consecutive days and each lesson was of 45 minute duration.

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**Significant programs and initiatives**

**Aboriginal education**

Minerva school is committed to promoting the educational achievements of all indigenous students and to improving the knowledge and understanding of all students about Aboriginal Australia. Each class teacher has incorporated into their program, activities and initiatives aimed at raising this awareness in 2011.

This year, the school band has also been involved with ‘Generation One’ - a movement to end the disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Our Music instructor, Mr Aris Kartsonis, has dedicated much of his time to writing a song that highlights equality and egalitarianism within the Australian community. The students’ performance was entered into the “Hands Across Australia” schools song competition. The students reveled in the experience and were able to raise awareness of these important issues.

**Multicultural education**

Minerva School is an inclusive environment where individual student differences are respected and valued. Whether that difference is a special need, individual belief system or country of origin all staff consciously strive to ensure all students receive an education and foster tolerance in a racism free learning environment which caters to the their individual cultural and learning needs.

With the implementation of quality teaching practices our learning programs are culturally inclusive and address issues such as racism and discrimination. The learning programs include topics and experiences that are relevant to our students to increase engagement and connectedness to learning and the community. Diversity and cultural knowledge is recognised and valued across all learning programs at Minerva School.

**Student welfare**

The DET’s Code of Conduct for all staff, the Anti-Bullying Policy and our Student Welfare and Discipline Policy are adhered to and used in conjunction with each other. These practices provide an environment that demonstrates and models respect, empathy, dignity, diversity and unconditional acceptance for all.
The school has four ‘I Care’ core values;
1. I care for others.
2. I care for myself
3. I care for others property.
4. I care about the environment.

Underpinning these core values is the whole school Positive Behaviour Intervention strategies and Choice Making approach. The implementation of the ‘Principal’s Award Book’ was successfully continued in 2011 across the whole school. This is a tiered system of tangible rewards that is accessible to every student. This system has complemented practices already in place throughout the school by adding another dimension to the range of student reward systems. It has been an outstanding success for the students and will continue into the future.

These strategies foster and encourage responsibility, develop conflict resolution skills, develop positive self esteem, self discipline and control.

All students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour. When incidents arise between the students or staff, all participated in restorative practices, focusing on self evaluation, demonstrating respect for others and taking ownership of actions.

The school aims to teach students the skills to develop respect and responsibility in their decision making processes.

Workplace Learning Programs

In 2011 30 students participated successfully in the workplace learning program. Students participated for up to 18 weeks, several progressing from one stage of the program to another at the commencement of the second semester.

Two students commenced the in-school work experience program in semester one undertaking activities to develop independent travel skills and sound generic work skills, performing tasks such as cleaning, collating and small item assembly. Both of these students moved to a supported work crew group in semester two having successfully met the standards of behaviour, attitude and skill development needed to progress to a community setting placement.

Two additional students commenced the in-school work experience program in semester 2.

Three students participated in independent work experience in a range of areas including Retail, Hospitality and Automotive throughout the year. Their placements were successful with positive reports from employers reflecting on the skills they had learned and enthusiasm and interest shown.

The Minerva School Supported Group Workplace Learning (SGWL) had 12 students further develop their work skills. This involved supervision by a teacher and SLSO at the following sites; Coles at Parkside Plaza Miranda, IDF Industries at Arncliffe, and Civic Industries at Caringbah.
Four students completed highly successful placements as part of the Combined Districts Schools Work Experience Program (CDSWEP). For one student this involved working with students and a teacher from another school. The sites included: Rays Outdoor at Taren Point and Lark Ellen Nursing Home at Jannali.

Five students working at retail sites, both independently and in a more intensively supported work crew, were undertaking work placement linked to their TAFE delivered Retail vocational education and training (TVET) courses. This gave the students, experiences designed to contextualise and practice the skills they learned during their course and provided opportunities to develop and assess their achievement of competency in an authentic retail setting.

Over the year several classes implemented the development of generic work skills during class based lessons and activities.

The structure of the workplace learning program must be flexible enough to meet the ever changing needs of our students. A continued focus on individualising the workplace learning experiences of students will ensure that students’ workplace learning skills are maximized. During 2012 we also intend to further implement the classroom based component of developing sound generic work skills.

Progress on 2011 targets

Indicated below is the progress the school has made on the targets identified in the Minerva School 2009 Annual School report and in the Minerva School 2009 – 2011 School Plan.

Target 1

Improved Literacy, Numeracy and Aboriginal Education Learning Outcomes for students.

Our achievements include:

- Ongoing in servicing of staff in the delivery of lesson content, assessment and the whole school reading program ensuring best practice delivery.
- Streamed reading groups continued in 2011.
- Documented evidence of improved reading outcomes.
- The home reading program was strengthened.
- Sight word program continued with tracking system being utilised.
- Aboriginal readers were implemented across the school.
- ‘Reading Eggs’ and ‘Mathletics’ subscription continued to increase engagement.
- Whole school spelling program was implemented.
- Streamed spelling groups began in 2011.
- Documented evidence of improved spelling outcomes.
• Implementation and training of new assessment schedule for reading ages.
• Staff being up skilled 1:1 in its application.
• ‘Spellodrome’ purchased to provide an extension to the spelling program.
• Literacy/ICT centre planned for 2012.
• Reading room maintained and broadened.
• Readers purchased to increase the level 1 readers to maintain interest.
• Worksheets compliment the sight reading program are being converted to Smart Notebook.
• Students participated in a range of aboriginal cultural activities.
• Literacy activities such as handwriting and comprehension developed for whole school use with an Aboriginal focus.
• Research into iPad applications for literacy and numeracy programs occurred with the plan for implementation in 2012.

Target 2
Improve Teacher Quality by Building School Capacity
Our achievements include:

• Increased professional knowledge of whole school processes through re-assignment of staff roles within the school.
• Ongoing support for all staff in the Department of Education and Training professional learning, on-line site MyPL@DET.
• In-school Professional learning programs which all staff completed in 2011 include: Nonviolent Crisis Intervention, Autism On-Line, Epilepsy, Prada Willi Syndrome , Inter-active Whiteboards, Connected Classroom Training.
• Expertise sharing to teaching staff involved in the Community of Special Schools Initiative, whereby a Minerva teacher disseminated her expertise and information in teaching ideas, resources, web sites and software specific to special education students. The presentation provided a comprehensive list of resources and the opportunity to join the teaching blog to access information as required.
• All staff were trained in CPR and current First Aid practices providing them current qualifications in both areas.
• Staff continued to participate in the Community of Schools on the Park combined staff development days.

Target 3
Improved environmental education of students and reduced ‘greenhouse’ gas emissions.
Our achievements include:

• The installation of Solar Panels at the beginning of 2011 from a $34,949 grant received through the National Solar Schools Program (NSSP). The solar panels are a quality alternative energy source which assists the school in decreasing power bills and lowering our carbon footprint.
• The solar panels are linked with a computer program so students can measure the amount of energy we receive and use from the solar panels and the direction and frequency of wind. This computer program provides cross-curricular learning activities for math, science and geography.
• The sensory garden including a vegetable patch was constructed towards the end of Term 3 2011, on the eastern side of the school and is now an active outdoor learning space for Minerva students.
• The sensory garden consists of native Australian plants which stimulate all the five senses. It has a raised garden bed where students grow and maintain vegetables and herbs to use as part of the garden to kitchen program. It has a compost bin which links with the students class recycling program. Students water the garden with water collected from the rainwater tank that was installed in 2010.
Classes continue to use the recycling program established in 2010 with good success. Each class uses colour coded boxes to distinguish between wastes and assists with the knowledge and management of the recycling process.

Key evaluations

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2011 our school carried out evaluations of the Individual Learning Support Plans and Environmental Education.

Educational and management practice

The area of Individual Learning Support Plans was selected for evaluation in 2011. Evaluation such as this enables future development and improvement to the Individual Learning Support Plan process.

Background

Students at our school have an Individual Learning Support Plan developed each year. The plan is developed and implemented to maximise achievable positive student outcomes.

Findings and conclusions

In 2011 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the Individual Learning Support Plans developed for students.

Indications from both parents and staff were positive and supportive of the Individual Learning Support Plan process. The initial development of Individual Learning Support Plans (LSPs) accommodated parent request times for meeting times to jointly develop agreed goals and outcomes and who was responsible.

Parents and carers have commented on how the Individual Learning Support Plan developed for their child have provided a clearly identified approach to achieve short and long term goals to maximise the student’s success in both academic and social areas within the school and the broader community.

Teachers indicated that the Individual Learning Support Plans provided a strong focus in developing the class program which then directly targets the identified specific goals for all students in their class.

Parents consistently expressed a view the school was supportive of their child’s academic, emotional, social and medical needs when approached, and that teachers and staff were proactive in communicating any issues or concerns directly by phone or communication books.

Students in many instances have been able to acknowledge they are working towards their Individual Learning Support Plan goals showing positive self-esteem and satisfaction in reaching those goals.

Teachers provided direct feedback to students working towards and reaching their Individual Learning Support Plan goals and outcomes at the annual student reviews.

Parents of students in their leaving year, expressed appreciation and sometimes relief in being provided with accurate and purposeful information by the school and Lilian Barter (region transition support teacher) regarding potential destinations for their child post school. This information included the ADHC funded programs: Community Participation and Transition to Work as well as referrals to
supported employment agencies and access to TAFE.

Future directions

- Continue to implement current refined Individual Learning Support Plan processes.
- Maintain direct input from Region transition support teacher.
- Support new staff to competently implement Individual Learning Support Plans.

Curriculum

Environmental Education

Background

The school has been striving to achieve increased student awareness of environmental education issues and positive participation in our school setting.

Findings and conclusions

Teachers successfully developed and implemented cross curricular (HSIE & Science) units of work enabling students to explore the impact of human activity on the Earth’s surface. These resources are complete and adaptable to varying age groups.

Students completed a range of worksheets requiring a wide variety of skills on the environment and recycling.

During 2011 our sensory garden was completed whereby class groups are able to use the area for a range of interests and appreciation. The compost bin area was revised making it student user friendly for depositing appropriate scrap food items. Students have been speaking favourably about their experiences including watering and light maintenance.

The installation of solar panels has reinforced to students, through class lessons that as a school we are attempting to reduce our power usage. Students are generally mindful of, and given responsibility in turning lights off when leaving their rooms.

Parents have been impressed by the high standard of student work in classrooms and displays of environment Collages, 3-D representations and environment trees.

Future directions

- Maintain student focus on environmental education through engaging class activities and access to Sensory Garden.
- Students to have access to computer data regarding the Solar Panels and electricity created for our school.
- Staff will attend environment courses and purchase appropriate resources.

Students have been taught to use colour coded bins to dispose of waste, learning the importance of recycling items; Red – regular rubbish, Yellow – Recyclable rubbish and Blue – Paper recycle.
Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2011 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Parents expressed that they felt welcome and supported by the school. They felt any issues raised were taken seriously and resolved in a timely and satisfactory manner. Parents acknowledged that Minerva staff are dedicated and extremely committed to students learning and wellbeing.

Parents consistently hold the view the school was a safe and protected environment for their child.

Students have said they like their school learning programs and feel they have improved their reading skills. They expressed they feel safe and happy at school. Students also stated they particularly enjoy all the social activities and events organized by the P&C and the Student Representative Council. Parents felt the profile of the School Captains and Prefects had been raised.

Teachers felt they were provided with a broad range of opportunities to develop their professional learning. They indicated the intensive training and support from their colleagues in coordinating new responsibilities had significantly improved their ability to teach, deliver programs positively and increase their leadership skills.

Staff and parents both indicated that the classroom environment is a stimulating place to learn. Parents continued to be satisfied with the progress of the home reader system and the whole school reading program. Parents were highly satisfied with the whole school approach to spelling being implemented in 2011.

Parents consistently expressed a view the school was a safe and protected environment for their child.

Future directions

Maintain focus on reading and spelling programs.

Continue to maintain the school website as a means of information sharing and promotion of the school.

Professional learning

- 12 teachers participated in professional learning activities
- The average expenditure per teacher on professional learning at the school level was $948.57
- Total school expenditure on teacher professional learning was $10,771.95
- Staff participated on development days in the following: CPR and First Aid, child protection, COSOP Behaviour, Student Welfare, Bullying, Discipline Policy, Non Crisis Intervention training, Strategic Planning, School Plan development, On-Line Autism training, Computer education introduction to Minerva Wikis
- Three new scheme teachers were working towards accreditation. Laura Gaunt completed her NST and is awaiting the results
- One new scheme teacher was maintaining accreditation at Professional Competence
- Michelle Cooney was the successful recipient of the ‘2010 Premier’s Adobe Information and Communication Technologies Scholarship’. Michelle embarked on a research study tour in 2011 and has since presented her findings to staff, COSSI and Adobe
- Tracey Gocher was the recipient of a Neita nomination – “Excellence in Teaching”
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

Improved Literacy, Numeracy and Aboriginal Education Learning Outcomes for students.

Outcome for 2012–2014

To enhance student learning, increase engagement levels and competency through innovative technology usage.

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- Twice yearly testing will reflect continued growth in the percentage of students achieving appropriate outcomes in literacy and numeracy targets in accordance with their individual learning plans in 2011 to 2014.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Provision of professional learning experiences to increase teacher capacity in collaborative planning, analyzing data and identifying student needs
- Maintain streamed reading and spelling groups.
- Use data analysis to drive school improvement
- Modifications to the literacy and numeracy programs to include the use of ipad applications and new technology and software to support target attainment in individual literacy and numeracy plans.
- Professional development and implementation in ‘Count me in Too’ Numeracy program 2012.
- Professional development and implementation of new curriculum changes.
- Investigate and implement online learning practices and digital learning resources such as blogs, wikis etc to support literacy and numeracy development.

School priority 2

Improved engagement and attainment across all KLAs and vocational learning programs.

Outcome for 2012–2014

To increase student participation and engagement across all KLAs including school centered work skills programs.

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- To increase individual rates of student participation and engagement through increased collaboration
- To increase student retention rates in Year 10 to Year 12 from 80% to 95% in 2012 to 2014.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Review and expand Sensory Integration Programs
- ICT and Library Centre to be merged together
- Restructure Work experience Program
- Establish Living and Work Skills Centre
- Conduct iPad trial and evaluation
• Implement whole school curriculum to promote engagement and retention
• Consolidate interagency support and develop proactive partnerships
• Additional IWBs installed throughout the school
• Provision of iPads for each classroom

School priority 3

Expand school leadership and management to build school improvement.

Outcome for 2012–2014

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

• Teaching Professional Standards Framework and The Quality Teaching Framework used to strengthen teacher capacity to improve student learning and engagement across all curriculum areas
• Increased opportunities for teacher promotion.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

• Teacher Leadership for School Improvement (TLSI) professional development program
• CMIT professional learning program
• Sydney region iPad trial
• Ongoing professional development in the Quality Teaching Framework to strengthen teacher capacity
• Provide access to professional learning programs to foster and support career development
• Support New Scheme teachers through professional growth programs and various mentoring approaches
• Engage Sydney Region student Services to support professional learning
• Professional development in Australian Curriculum

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.

Mrs F Young, Principal
Ms T Gocher, Assistant Principal
Mr R Hely, Assistant Principal
Ms K Shacallis, Assistant Principal
Teaching Staff; Ms M Cooney, Ms L Gaunt, Mr A Kartsonas, Mrs J Marshall, Mr C Sinton, Ms D Slater, Mr G Tunks and Ms C Wemyss.

School contact information

Minerva School
Eton Street SUTHERLAND 2232
Ph: 02 9521 3433
Fax: 02 9545 3316
Email: minerva-s.school@det.gov.au
Web: www.minerva-s.schools.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 5616

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: