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Principal's foreword

Introduction

The following report provides an overview of Sunset's progress towards its goals, along with specific information relating to student learning outcomes, professional development of the workforce and community views of the school for the 2008 school year.

2008 represented a significant milestone for Sunset State School as the school community celebrated the school's Fortieth birthday. In addition to this all staff worked in collaboration with students and parents to conduct a Triennial School Review. This process entailed the analysis of the school's performance from 2006 – 2008 identifying what worked well and what were our challenges – this analysis then directly informed the strategic direction for 2009 – 2011.

The following goals were achieved in the 2008 school year:

A whole school spelling program was implemented.

100% of teachers were trained and supported in the implementation of the First Steps in Mathematics program.

Literacy block was extended to incorporate the Lexile reading program for students achieving above reading benchmark standards.

100% of students negotiated personal learning goals that celebrated the individual distance travelled for every child.

The Queensland Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Framework was implemented.

A full time Support Teacher Learning Difficulties and Upper Literacy Teacher worked in collaboration with Year 3-7 teachers to provide intensive support for students who were achieving below benchmark standards.

2008 School Data was relatively comparable to previous years – our Year 2 Diagnostic Net data saw a decrease in the number of students requiring additional support in Writing. This could be attributed to the focus that our Head of Curriculum took with all teachers around the explicit teaching of writing. The 2008 Year 2 cohort performed stronger in Writing while achieving the same results in Reading and Numeracy. Year 2 students identified as requiring additional support in all aspects of the Continua were supported through the development of an intervention program based on the Developmental Continua. This program was implemented by the key teacher, classroom teacher and teacher aides.

2008 was the first year that National Assessment in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) was conducted. Students in Years 3, 5 and 7 participated in the testing in May with school and individual reports issued in November. An analysis of our whole school trends indicates that Sunset students generally performed the strongest in Reading and Number. Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation were the two areas that our students found the most challenging. While NAPLAN assessment only captures a moment in time and subsequently only reflects one dimension of a child's ability/knowledge, it is interesting to note that our Year 7 students performed extremely well in Numeracy with 72% of students achieving at or above national benchmarks. This result could be attributed to the fact that the

students had participated in the First Steps in Mathematics program in both Years 6 and 7.

Future outlook

The Triennial School Review process identified the following priority areas for 2009:

Learning:

Literacy – teaching of Spelling, Oracy and Reading Comprehension.

Numeracy - programming and planning teaching and learning experiences that focus on mental strategies, maths routines, investigations and real-life applications.

Integrated Curriculum - embed essential learnings and ways of working into all key learning areas.

Quality assessment, moderation and reporting.

Internal monitoring of individual children, year levels and whole school learning outcomes.

Schools:

Whole school values and social skills program.

Whole school anti-bullying program.

Transition programs that support Pre school to Prep and Year 7 to High School.

Quality partnerships with parents, community and colleagues.

Workforce:

Professional development will be provided that targets both individual and whole school needs. Focus areas include:

Literacy – oracy, reading comprehension, grammar.

Numeracy – First Steps in Mathematics

Curriculum – quality assessment and reporting processes.

Our school at a glance

School Profile

Sunset State School currently has 292 students enrolled but can peak at around 315 students throughout the school year. Our campus is co-educational and offers classes from Prep through to Year 7. Sunset also has a Special Education Program which is overseen by a Head of Special Education Services who works closely with the Principal and teachers to integrate students and support them both with their individual education goals and their inclusion into mainstream curriculum.

Sunset School was opened in 1968 and during Mount Isa's peak years had an enrolment of around 1000 students. As a result our school has the facilities and space to cater for a large number of students. All of our classes have the unique advantage of being in a double teaching space and we also have an extremely well maintained school grounds with a large sporting oval that is accessed by community sports organisations. The maintenance and ongoing improvement of our school's facilities is a high priority for the Administration team. In 2008 a number of key refurbishment projects were achieved including the internal repaint of four classrooms, the installation of new carpet in four classrooms and the painting of a jungle mural in the Year 1-2 eating area.

Sunset State School has a dedicated, professional, skilled and passionate staff. All staff members work in partnership to create a supportive and challenging learning environment in which all students are encouraged and supported to reach their full potential. Our school is staffed by:

Principal

Head of Special Education Services

Head of Curriculum

Support Teacher Learning Difficulties

Upper Literacy teacher

14 Classroom Teachers

2.6 Special Education Teachers

1 Physical Education Teacher

1 Japanese Teacher

1 Music Teacher

1 Teacher Librarian

15 Teacher Aides

1 Responsible Thinking Room Co-ordinator

Specialists – Guidance Officer, Speech Therapist, Instrumental Music Teachers

Rugby League Development Officer

Ancillary Staff

Business Services Manager

Administration Officer

Groundsman

Four Cleaners

Curriculum offerings

Sunset State School aligns itself with the Mount Isa District Literacy, Numeracy and Integrated Curriculum Roadmaps. This alignment ensures that our students are engaged in State wide curriculum, guaranteeing our students of an education that is second to none.

The teaching of Literacy and Numeracy skills remains the core focus for Sunset staff. In 2008 human and financial resources were maximised to ensure curriculum programs were delivered that enabled success for every child – supporting those students below benchmark standards, while also challenging and extending students working at or above benchmark standards. Our whole team approach to delivering quality literacy and numeracy blocks enables the following to occur:

Every Prep to Year 3 classroom had a full-time Teacher Aide to support programs.

Year 4-7 classrooms accessed Teacher Aide support according to the needs of the students in each class.

Support Teacher Learning Difficulties worked in partnership with Year 4-7 teachers to develop and support Literacy and Numeracy programs for students who require additional intervention.

Upper Literacy Teacher worked in partnership with the Year 6 and 7 teachers to support Literacy programs.

Staff from the Special Education Unit supported teachers to modify curriculum as required.

Teacher Librarian enhanced literacy blocks by working with students who were above where they should be in reading.

Sunset had a trained facilitator in First Steps in Maths who worked off line training and supported all Teachers and Teacher Aides in the First Steps program. Our work in this area resulted in Sunset leading the development of the Whole District Maths Program that incorporated Essentials, First Steps in Maths and Syllabus documents.

Our classroom teachers participate in both school based and District moderation at the end of each semester. Teacher's moderate student's writing samples and integrated curriculum. This is done on a five point scale and enables the teachers to provide specific feedback to students on their academic performance, highlighting where their strengths are and identifying areas for future development. Teachers' participation in moderation provides invaluable feedback and professional development and ensures that the academic standards and benchmarks of Sunset are comparable to the rest of the State.

For the past three years Sunset has implemented the Building Blocks to Literacy program (Barbara Brann) in all Prep to Year 3 classrooms. Our teachers and staff are committed to the delivery of this program as we believe that a child's Literacy development is fundamental to their school engagement and achievement. The program ensures that our teachers are explicitly teaching students the five areas of literacy development – print, listening, looking, moving and talking. These five areas are all developmental and a child must be progressing in each domain to continue to develop their Literacy skills. Students are engaged in a wide range of activities through whole class, small group and individual experiences to enable them to develop the essential skills of each domain. The work that our Head of Curriculum, Teachers and Teacher Aides have done with this program has resulted in a number of schools adopting this program. Many of our classrooms have also become a showcase with Teachers from other schools, Deputy Principals and Principals visiting to see the program in action.

70% of Sunset's students identify as either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and as a result Sunset teachers embed Indigenous perspectives and plan for Indigenous learning needs at the core of their teaching strategies. Sunset offers a wide range of strategies to achieve this:

Making the Jump Program – in 2008 55% of our Year one students were identified as operating in the early stages of Standard Australian English. As a result our classroom Teachers and Teacher Aides implemented the Making the Jump Program with these students. A part-time Early Childhood Teacher was employed to support classroom Teachers and Aides with the implementation of this program. Explicit learning experiences were

provided to enable the students to develop grammatical structures of Standard Australian English.

Walking, Talking, Text is a program utilised by all of our Teachers to immerse students into text by providing numerous learning experiences to enhance their understanding and interpretation of their reading. This program resulted in a significant improvement in Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' reading comprehension.

Sunset also works in partnership with Townview School and the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations to run the Piccaninny Playgroup at our school two mornings a week. The Playgroup is attended by Sunset parents and children between the ages of 2 and 4. Children who attend the playgroup are exposed to numerous pre school learning experiences providing a wonderful transition for them before they attend Prep.

Extra curricula activities

Sunset School has a large number of students who are naturally gifted in the sporting arena. Sport comprises a large component of our school's extra curricula program and it enables our students to develop skills and attitudes that are essential to success in the academic field. Through participation in sports students develop a sense of pride, commitment, discipline, courage, teamwork and most importantly the willingness to have a go and persevere with challenges. At Sunset we have found that student's participation in sporting life has resulted in a change in their behaviour and attitude to school life. Any child who is a member of a Sunset Tiger sports team is promoted as a positive role model within our school. Our students natural sporting ability is reflected in the 2008 sporting results:

2008 Sunset Tigers basketball team won the Interschool Sports Competition

2008 Sunset Tigers softball team came runner up in the Interschool Sports Competition

We also had a large number of students selected into District and North West sports teams in the following areas: touch football, soccer, softball, rugby league, netball and athletics. The student's investment and commitment to sport was rewarded in 2008 as the school purchased new soccer, touch football and netball uniforms.

While sport is a huge component of the extra curricula life of Sunset, we are also committed to promoting a love of the Arts and culture within our students. As a result our students are also given the opportunity to participate in:

School choir which performs at the Mount Isa Eisteddfod as well as at community events

Rock Pop Mime – runners up in 2008

Instrumental music program

Arts Council

Student Council.

How computers are used to assist learning

Our ICT Co-ordinator works in collaboration with the Principal, Head of Curriculum and Classroom Teachers to ensure that Information and Communication Technology is integral to all teaching, learning and assessment process. Computers are utilised to enhance students learning experiences through programs that support classroom work, online resources to enhance units and programs such as Powerpoint, Publisher and KidsPix that enable students to present their culminating activities. Digital cameras, data projectors, interactive whiteboards and movie making programs are also utilized by individual Teachers. Each classroom has a minimum of 4 computers with our school computer:student ratio sitting at one computer to every 3.5 students. our school's computer roll over plan ensures that we replace older computers when required while also striving to increase the computer to student ratio. Our school Library is also equipped with 12 computers which is always a popular spot for students to visit during their lunchtime. The library computers are used extensively for the online Lexile Framework program during reading rotations for students in years 4-7. Teachers and students also have access to a variety of online teaching resources

Our school at a glance

including The Learning Place, Blackboard and Ziptales. In 2008 our school underwent a Managed Operating Environment Build which enhanced the use of English and maths software programs and subsequently increased the use of ICTs through all key learning areas. Regular professional development is provided for all staff as our ICT co-ordinator utilises staff meetings and emails to continually develop and challenge our staff.

Social climate

2008 Student School Opinion survey data indicates an increase in the percentage of students who are a) happy to come to school, b) feel safe at school, c) believe they are treated fairly at school and d) are happy with the behaviour and the discipline of students at the school. This data can be directly attributed to the fact that all staff are committed to continually reflecting on our whole school approach to social climate and are committed to implementing new practices.

In 2008 our school continued to implement "Bully Off! A Whole School Approach to anti-bullying".

The aim of the Bully Off Program is to empower students to report any bullying that they experience or witness and enables Administration to track student behaviour and provide appropriate consequences and intervention for the perpetrators.

Each adult on duty is issued with a playground folder that contains the bully log. Any incidences that are reported to the Teachers/Teacher Aides are recorded in the bully log and a consequence is provided that aligns with the guidelines outlined in this document. At the end of each week the Principal receives a copy of all of the students entered in the log. Students who have been entered 3 or more times are then placed on a social skills program that is run during their lunch breaks. Parents are always informed of their children's involvement and are provided with the opportunity to provide input into the focus of the course. Student's behaviour is then monitored via playground behaviour contracts.

A student and staff survey conducted as part of the Triennial School Review indicated a significant reduction in the amount of class time that is taken up dealing with playground issues. Students feel empowered by the bully log and feel that if they report any incidents, they will be listened to and supported. 95% of the student population surveyed indicated that they feel that Sunset is a happier place since the introduction of the Bully Off! program.

In addition to innovative programs such as these, our school is consistent in their approach to addressing student behaviour. Our school's Responsible Behaviour Plan frames everything that we do and guides staff to make consistent and fair decisions. We believe that it is essential to recognise and celebrate students who display appropriate behaviour as they provide essential role models to other students. In addition to this we are committed to addressing and supporting students who choose to display inappropriate behaviour. This behaviour is addressed through a whole school program – the Responsible Thinking Process. In addition to this, targeted behaviour support is offered and parents are encouraged to work in partnership with the school to address inappropriate behaviour. If required, intensive support is also provided and the school works closely with external agencies to support and address the needs of the individual student.

In 2008 the Supportive School Environment Committee developed the Student of the Week trophy to be awarded on parade each week. Classroom and Specialist Teachers identify a Student Of The Week who receives a custom made certificate and holds onto the trophy for the week. The Student Of The Week then presents the trophy to the new recipient on the following parade. Trophy winners are then featured in a photo in our weekly newsletter.

Sunset staff place a strong emphasis on ensuring parents are informed about their child's behaviour and we particularly believe that it is important to celebrate success!

Involving parents in their child's education.

Our School's P&C provides a valuable avenue through which parents can be directly involved in their child's

Our school at a glance

education. No school policy, project or action plan is progressed without input from the P&C – monthly meetings provide a forum through which parents can remain informed regarding their child's school while also having an input into shaping the school's future direction. In 2008 the P&C worked closely with the staff to organise our school's Forty and Fabulous Fete – the fete was a huge success and extremely well supported by the local community. The fete was the first one that the Sunset School community had held in over twelve years and it was a resounding success creating a carnival like atmosphere and providing many of our students with the opportunity to enjoy a fete for the first time. In addition to the P&C, our school has a number of informal avenues through which parents can be involved:

Popping in to visit your child's Classroom/Teacher – all of our classes have an open door policy and our Teachers are committed to making parents feel welcome and valued in our school.

Reading the weekly newsletters.

Participating in parent-teacher interviews;

Attending class activity days;

Being involved in school life, for example helping in the canteen or assisting with classroom activities;

Attending NAIDOC activities;

Attending the big breakfast meet and greet at the beginning of the school year;

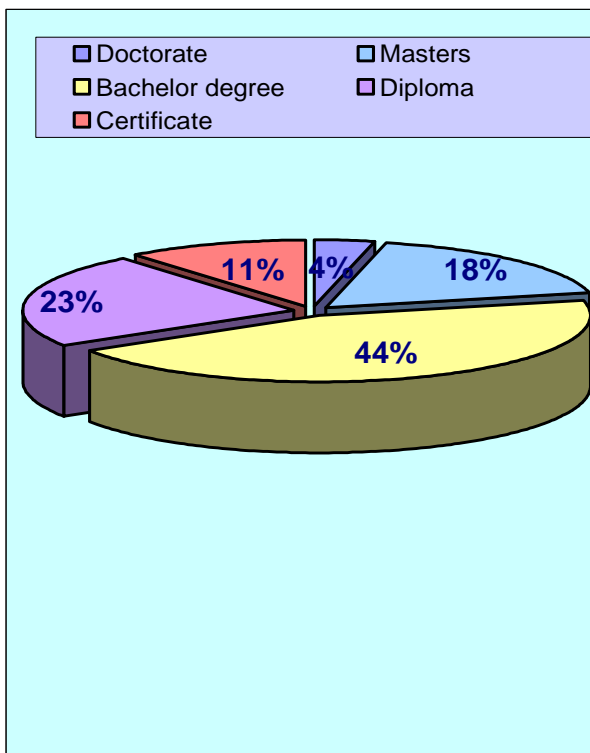
Supporting athletics and swimming carnivals;

Attending our weekly parade on a Monday morning at 8:30 a.m.

Our staff profile

Qualifications of all teachers.

Highest level of attainment	Number of classroom teachers and school leaders at the school
Doctorate	2
Masters	10
Bachelor degree	25
Diploma	13
Certificate	6



Expenditure on and teacher participation in professional development.

The total funds expended on teacher professional development in 2008 were \$ **\$18207.19**.

The major professional development initiatives were as follows:

Literacy:

Building Blocks to Literacy

Smart words spelling program

Year 1-3 teacher literacy training

Functional grammar

Development of criteria sheets

Numeracy:

First Steps in Mathematics

Investigations

School climate:

M&M pathways – social skills program

Classroom profile training

Our staff profile

Play is the way social program

100% of teachers participate in collaborative planning with their teaching partner and Head of Curriculum. Planning days incorporate relevant and meaningful professional development for each individual teacher.

Topics covered included:

Guided reading

Reading comprehension

Balanced reading and writing program

Balanced maths program

Implementation of integrated curriculum through purposeful and relevant units of work

Developing standards for criteria sheets

Aligning units of work with QCATS and NAPLAN testing.

The involvement of the teaching staff in professional development activities during 2008 was 81%.

Average staff attendance

For permanent and temporary staff and school leaders the staff attendance rate was 97% in 2008.

Proportion of staff retained from the previous school year.

From the end of the 2007 school year, 72 % of staff was retained by the school for the entire 2008 school year.

Performance of our students

Student attendance

The average attendance rate as a percentage in 2008 was 82%.

Key outcomes

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results - our reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy results for the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

Domain	Measures	Yr 3	Yr 5	Yr 7
Reading	Average score for the school	282	386	451
	Average score for Queensland	371.1	466.1	528.1
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008 64 %	43 %	52 %
Writing	Average score for the school	257	375	448
	Average score for Queensland	391.8	468.9	522.7
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008 49 %	47 %	61 %
Spelling	Average score for the school	241	375	442
	Average score for Queensland	366.7	462.0	528.0
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008 37 %	43 %	45 %
Grammar and Punctuation	Average score for the school	241	366	436
	Average score for Queensland	370.4	476.6	518.0
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008 42 %	47 %	52 %
Numeracy	Average score for the school	263	391	482
	Average score for Queensland	367.9	458.2	539.0
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008 42 %	55 %	72 %

Performance of our students

Results in the Year 2 Diagnostic Net	
	Percentage of students not requiring additional support
Reading	39
Writing	52
Number	39

Value added
<p>Historically Sunset's school data has been below State and Like Schools benchmarks – this trend is evident across both Literacy and Numeracy. The curriculum renewal that Sunset has undertaken in the past three years is our direct response to this. Our whole school curriculum plan ensures that the focus is on the explicit teaching of Literacy and Numeracy skills in alignment with Statewide benchmarks.</p> <p>In 2008 we continued our focus on personalised learning with each child negotiating a reading goal with their classroom teacher. This process enables the students to have an understanding of where they are currently at with their learning and where they want to be. Individual reading goals ensures all students experience success and are challenged to continue to develop their skills. In 2008 88% of our students achieved their personalised reading goals. Student who achieve their personal goals are recognised both in class and on our weekly parade – individual students who are progressing well share their success with the Principal and Head of Curriculum by reading and/or sharing their work. Inspired by the success of this approach some teachers expanded the personalised goals to include Numeracy and Writing tasks.</p>

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction with the school	
Performance Indicator.	Sunset's 2008 Performance.
Percentage of students satisfied that they are getting a good education at Sunset.	77.1%
Percentage of parents satisfied that they are getting a good education at Sunset.	75%
Percentage of parents/caregivers satisfied that the school is a good school.	75%
Percentage of students satisfied with the way computers are used for learning.	70.9%
Percentage of school workforce satisfied with access to learning opportunities that relate to school and systemic initiatives.	80%

Performance of our students

Every August a sample of parents, students and all staff members participate in the School Opinion Survey. Responses provided in this survey provide vital data for the school to reflect on how they are travelling in key areas and identify key strategic goals for the coming school year.

The staff morale of Sunset State School has always been high which we believe is a key ingredient to our student's success. 2008 staff opinion survey data illustrates that more than 90% of staff agree or strongly agree about the following:

There is good team spirit among the staff, the school is a good place in which to work and the staff are happy working here.

Such a high level of staff satisfaction enables us to maintain a vibrant and supportive learning environment for all students. Sunset State School is committed to providing a relevant, meaningful and personalised learning experience for each and every child.