

Clayton North Primary School - 2004 Annual Report to the School Community

The essence of our school continues to be its values. When new arrivals see the students and staff treating each other with care, acceptance and respect, there is a compelling example to follow and treat each other accordingly. When new students enter classrooms where responsibility, self-reliance, teamwork and honesty are modelled, they too tend to take on those characteristics. When school programs are shaped for inclusiveness, it becomes part of our everyday existence, nothing special, but at the same time a compelling celebration of our humanity. It's little wonder that new arrivals quickly sign up to join the Clayton North Primary School tribe!

We have a set of values, which, at their core, promote the individuality and uniqueness of each of us. For me, the test of school year is the degree that we have moved to allow individuality to blossom. To what degree have we identified constraints on individual growth and taken action to alleviate those constraints? When asked what is required to solve problems, a common response is more money. Yet we know that this is a finite resource. And money alone will not remove the constraints of closed minds, nor practices that are unhelpful in supporting the growth of individuals. But what a mighty challenge when the individuals in our school keep changing!

At the end of 2004, approximately 30% of the total enrolment, was still be in their first year at Clayton North Primary School, and over 60% of our current population have been enrolled since the beginning of 2003. It is quite remarkable that the school is able to retain its ethos and character in the face of these statistics.

For a long time I have been convinced that a school's ability to bend to meet the needs of individuals has been blocked by ignorance of the actual impact a school's programs was having on its students. Teachers are now seeking much more information about students' abilities and interests before embarking on teaching programs, tailoring them to maximise student engagement. Sometimes these are tiny steps, sometimes these are small adjustments, but sometimes it is all it takes to bring joy to learning. For me it is the beginning of an avalanche of improvements in the teaching/learning paradigm. It allows a school to cope with the ever-changing needs of its students. It allows for the leadership role of the teacher and a true respect for students.

I feel proud to work in such an environment where people give so much of their life to our school – teaching and support staff and parents working for our children. It is with great pride that I write of our achievements during 2004 and thank the community for its continued support and encouragement.

Parent perception of the school has remained extremely positive. We are indeed very appreciative of the fact that parents have enthusiastically accepted changes that have been made and have willingly completed surveys which enable us to determine future directions.

Our dedicated and committed staff have worked co-operatively as a unified team to ensure that the process of change and continuous improvement has been implemented in a manner that recognises Clayton North Primary as an individual school that is accountable to its own community as well as the government.

The School Charter Priority of further developing differentiated learning and teaching programs which improve student learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy has continued to be our focus for the year. Staff have focussed consistently on catering for the differing learning styles of our students and their vast range of different needs in the academic field.

Professional Development has continued to be a priority of the school. The staff at Clayton North has shown enthusiasm for ongoing self improvement and they should be congratulated on their willingness to undertake many programs outside of school hours. The belief that we are all committed to lifelong learning is paramount to instilling a love of learning within the community – staff, parents and children.

We are all extremely pleased with student performance in English and Mathematics. We have consistently performed above 'like schools' at most year levels and in many instances have achieved results above the statewide benchmarks. The staff are to be congratulated on their dedication to teaching and learning and the manner in which they have developed programs which meet the extremely diverse needs of our community. Transience continues to have a major impact on classroom operation and staff have continued to develop strategies to cater for all newly arrived children throughout the year.

As we look back on 2004 we are aware of the many changes that have occurred at Clayton North Primary. We welcomed new teachers – Puneeta Chanana, Kristen Schultz and Liam Brown into the Clayton North teaching community and also welcomed Robyn Payne in the area of literacy support. I thank them all for their contributions during the year.

The Information and Communication Technologies program sees our children actively using the computers as a tool to assist their learning. I never cease to be amazed at their confidence and skill in accessing information to address issues raised in the classroom. Craig Orr has done wonderful job in keeping the system up and running and his ability to be a 'fix-it' person is highly appreciated.

The Out of School Hours program has been well attended for both sessions throughout the year. The program is a wonderful support to the school community and I thank Sarah Trevisan and her dedicated team for the high levels of enthusiasm and support for our students.

I would like to thank Rebecca Tatman for her work in the office and the library and Lauren Milligan for her tireless efforts and without whom the day to day organisation of the school would be much less smooth.

As 2004 closed we said 'goodbye' to the following staff :

Christine Campbell has moved on to teach in the private system, Puneeta Chanana has accepted an appointment to Lyndale PS and Kate Mallia is now teaching at Aspendale Gardens PS. Robyn Payne has been accepted into a Bachelor of Education degree course at Geelong – a wonderful achievement and we wish her every success on her new journey. I thank each of these people for their support, enthusiasm and commitment to Clayton North.

My thanks also to Greg Richards - our Assistant Principal, all staff, School Council and parents for their support and encouragement during 2004 and I continue to look forward to exciting times at Clayton North as we strive to provide the best educational opportunities for children by catering for their social, physical, emotional and academic needs.

Academic

The Early Years Prep – Year 2 reading achievement levels are well above benchmark level when compared to 'like schools' and the state. This is an outstanding achievement.

Further results in literacy – reading, writing, speaking and listening and numeracy – number and measurement, across the school were pleasing and more than compared positively with 'like schools'.

The school offered participation in academic competitions coordinated by the University of N.S.W. in Computer, Mathematics, English, Writing and Science. We have extended this program in recent years due to the increasing demand from the school community. We were pleased with the results that our students achieved in this program.

Cultural

The COTE program has continued to contribute to community involvement in the school, especially those from backgrounds other than English. This year students studied Koori culture and was indeed highly successful in informing students of our own cultural heritage. For the first time the program was a 'specialist' subject, coordinated by Heather Bourke. The program included classroom curriculum development, parents as a direct source of information, and culminated in an day of cultural celebration for the whole school community. The recognition and acceptance of differing cultural heritage contributes directly to student self-esteem and identity which in turn supports student learning.

School Programs

The school has maintained a high level of success in interschool sport as part of the Oakleigh District School Sport Association. The mixed volleyball team and both girls and mixed softball teams were district premiers. A number of students represented the district at cross country and athletics championships. Many thanks must be given to Laura Ellem for her outstanding co-ordination of these areas and to staff who willingly coach interschool teams.

The school outdoor education and camping program continues to prove highly successful with large numbers of students participating in the year 5/6 Camp Coolamatong experience, the 3/4's having a wonderful time at Golden Valley's Lodge and our year 2 students participating in a 'sleepover' at school. Again, these experiences would not be possible without the dedication and support of our teachers, who freely give up their time for the benefit of our students.

There are many support services provided to students to ensure access to classroom programs and expected levels of achievement. Social Worker and Guidance Officer - Kerry Browne, Speech Pathologist - Anna Norris and our School Nurse - Sue Radak. Each of these people has provided specialised assistance to individual children, groups of children in a coordinated manner in consultation with classroom teachers.

Newly arrived students from Non English Speaking Backgrounds were supported by Narelle Hoskins, an out-posted teacher from Blackburn English Language School. Narelle provides intensive support to students learning English. The program is a key element to the full participation of all students in learning programs.

The After School and Before School Care programs provide support to the school community. We maintained our staff development day programs as a service to those families where both parents were working. The Before School program has received increased patronage and is seen by parents as essential to the daily routine of the family. Our coordinator, Sarah Trevisan and her team are to be congratulated on the positive atmosphere that is enjoyed in the Out of School Hours programs.

The Prep Transition program has maintained its positive influence upon the change from home or kindergarten to school. The program includes communication with local feeder kindergartens, beginning in June, to inform parents of services and programs provided by the school. Although not attracting as many participants as would be desired, the "word of mouth" that results reaches other families.

There were two Performing Arts productions during 2004; the Junior School performed a concert that complimented the teaching unit for the term – many happy faces on the night – both from parents and students showed just how valuable the experience was. The Senior School staged a production at here at school in the multipurpose room titled "Kids in Space". This production was the culmination of many hours of work by students and staff. The production was designed to provide the children with maximum participation and challenge. This year the students were empowered to take a large degree of responsibility in the design of the production from concept through to the final performances. This 'ownership' provided them with a remarkable opportunity to experience all aspects of theatre – design, set construction, costuming, makeup, choreography etc.

Access to the new multi- purpose room was an essential element in the success of the Performing Arts program. These productions require a whole staff involvement and contribution. Many thanks to all staff for making these events a wonderful learning experience for the children.

Innovation & Excellence (Middle Years Initiative) – This program is in the introductory stage where staff from Primary, Secondary and Special school settings have met to design programs that address student needs in the Middle Years (Year 5 – Year 9). The school entered this program during 'Phase 3' of the DE&T initiative. It involves setting agreed goals to achieve mutual needs and enjoys funding and staffing support in its implementation.

Resources and Facilities

Our school is equipped to provide educational opportunities for our children's learning in the new century. The media centre has become a key feature of educational programs as a library and ICT resource. All classes have access to this resource in timetabled sessions for research which has enabled greater access to learning through multimedia.

The ICT program is supported through an intranet that links all classroom computers and those of the media centre. Leasing options have been adopted to ensure that the hardware maintains pace with new technologies.

The multipurpose room has enabled large gatherings of the school community, a performance and rehearsal venue for school productions and an indoor environment for P.E. programs. It also 'came to the rescue' as a temporary classroom for the 5/6 students as part of out stage three facilities upgrade.

The last stage of the building program will create three new classrooms, a canteen facility, an onsite staff car park and formal entrances, new netball/basketball courts, landscaping, and an upgrading of the student toilets. The finished works will provide an integrated environment that is designed to provide a working environment for staff and children which will strongly support our educational philosophy.

New School Charter

At the end of 2004, the School Council ratified the new School Charter which will guide us through the next three years.

The School's Mission is: 'To provide a safe and secure environment where all students are valued, encouraged, supported, and challenged in to reach their potential. This is achieved in a social environment founded on the School's Values of: care, acceptance, respect, responsibility, self-reliance, teamwork and honesty.

The School's Vision is as follows:

- All staff valued, encouraged, supported, and challenged in their lifelong learning journeys.
- Students and staff finding enjoyment in learning, and the recognition and recognition and celebration of achievements.
- Every student supported whilst growing in self-esteem and developing resilience and self reliance.
- Students and teachers, together, will be constantly engaged in analysing their learning situation and developing improvements.
- Staff highly committed to their roles and professional growth.
- Students becoming lifelong learners, developing values, habits and cooperative behaviours that will sustain them long beyond their schooling years
- Our school enjoying continued success through continual improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of classroom practice, school leadership and management processes
- Increasing involvement in the life of the school, by the students, their parents and other supporters of the school system
- Parents as being highly satisfied, appreciative and supportive of the school.
- Confidence in the school within the wider community.

School Goals

Curriculum Achievement: To ensure that all students develop appropriate levels of literacy and numeracy as measured against Like School and Statewide Benchmarks.

Curriculum Provision To provide a developmental, balanced and challenging curriculum that promotes excellence and enhances learning outcomes for all students.

Environment: To provide a safe, secure learning environment where the school values of care, acceptance, respect, responsibility, teamwork, self-reliance and honesty are paramount and where all stakeholders are focussed on providing optimum learning opportunities for all students.

Management: To develop an effective and enthusiastic learning community to support staff in developing pedagogical and leadership skills which ensure the realisation of the schools goals and priorities.

Resources: The provision of resources which reflect school priorities and focus areas thus enabling effective implementation of curriculum and improved student learning outcomes.

School Priorities

Priority 1 - Improved student learning through the incorporation of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards.

Priority 2 - To develop strong social competencies in students and a positive attitude to personal wellbeing and healthy lifestyles.

As a school we are proud of our achievements and commit ourselves to providing an educationally stimulating, aesthetically attractive, friendly, caring and safe environment which will enable all of our children to:

- achieve maximum academic progress
- develop an optimistic view of learning and life
- be a productive and co-operative member of our school community.

Bernie Parks
Principal