Annual School Report
2010
Our messages

From the Principal

John Palmer Public School is a vibrant, rapidly growing school located in Sydney’s fastest growing suburb, The Ponds. Set within spacious, landscaped grounds, and offering state of the art facilities, it has a well-deserved reputation within the community for the quality of innovative and dynamic learning programs offered which are designed to meet the needs of individual students.

Enthusiastic and highly qualified staff work together with the community to provide an environment of the highest quality where students are encouraged to be safe, to demonstrate respect for themselves and others, and to actively engage in the learning opportunities provided for them. Emphasis is placed on learning for the 21st century, including acquisition of sound literacy, numeracy and technology skills. All classes are provided with the latest technology, with internet accessible computers in every room as well as access to interactive whiteboards, a connected classroom and multimedia programs. A variety of extracurricular activities provide opportunities for students to develop an extensive range of interests and skills.

A Western Sydney Region Early Intervention support class was established this year, providing a much needed service for families within the area. The support class operates as part of the school, providing young students with special needs a rich and inclusive learning environment in the year prior to attending school. Our school is a member of the Norwest Community of Schools and works closely with neighbouring schools to provide programs for both students and parents. We are supported by an active P&C, an involved community and The Ponds Community Development Program.

From an initial enrolment of 44 students in 2008, our population has expanded to 278 students in 2010. It is anticipated that the school will serve in excess of 420 students 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.

Deborah Blackwell
Principal

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From the Parents and Citizens Association
Through the combined efforts of its members, the P&C has excelled this year.

It has continued to successfully organise workshops for Mothers and Fathers Day. Our first Easter Fun Afternoon was held in March, and in November, our second Outdoor Movie Night was a great success despite the inclement weather. The school and greater community enjoyed both events.

P&C members have represented the school community on various committees, including non-local placement of students, finance, canteen establishment, OOSH review and school self evaluation. Parent representatives have also been instrumental in the selection of new staff through the merit selection process. In 2010 this included two new Assistant Principals as well as a class teacher to commence in 2011.

We have continued our relationship with The Ponds Community Development Program through Tuula Schaeffer. Tuula is a great friend to the school and P&C and we appreciate her ongoing support.

With both the school and membership growing, the future looks bright for the P&C. We all look forward to reaching new heights in the coming new year.

Sharon Wunschl
JPPS P&C President

From our Student Representative Council (SRC)
The Student Representative Council grew this year with two students from every class in Stages 1-3 involved. Students provided ideas, made posters and announcements, assisted in selling and donating items to help make the SRC fundraising efforts in 2010 a success.

Amongst these activities included the school disco where $240 was raised to assist with the purchase of an Interactive Whiteboard (IWB). A further $250 was raised for the IWB at our end of term mufti day.

Recognising the plight of children less fortunate than ourselves, the SRC raised money for Stewart House. We quickly sold out of the popular Stewie the Dolphin keychains and $220 dollars was raised.

The second half of the year saw the SRC raise awareness about diabetes. We raised $228 for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation through a jelly bean guessing competition. We also raised money for the Diabetes Council. With the school’s participation in ‘Buzz Day’ we raised over $750 by selling a range of pens, toys and fridge magnets.

The SRC also raised funds by holding a pyjama day to support the purchase of reading materials for our learning support programs.

The Student Representative Council wishes to express its thanks to the students, staff and families that have supported our events this year. Balancing the needs of charitable organisations against the needs of the school has guided our choice of fundraising events. We are proud of our successes this year and are honoured to have represented the students of John Palmer Public School in 2010.

Student Representative Council 2010
Our context

Student Information

Student enrolment profile
John Palmer Public School serves a diverse community in the fastest growing suburb of Sydney. Enrolments have grown steadily from an initial 44 students in January 2008 to 278 students in November 2010. It is anticipated that our population will exceed 420 students at the beginning of 2011 and continue to grow as housing is established and smaller numbers in senior years are replaced with larger Kindergarten groups. The graph at the right provides information about the number of students enrolled in each year as at 26 November 2010.

Forty nine percent of our students have a language background other than English with twenty five different language groups being represented. Students speaking the Hindi and Punjabi languages represent the largest non-Anglo cultural groups. None of our students are from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background.

Student attendance profile
Overall student attendance is pleasing with school figures higher than both Western Sydney Region and the state.

Seventeen of our students were presented with a Western Sydney Region Award recognising outstanding attendance at our Annual Excellence Assembly.

Significant outbreaks of highly contagious diseases such as chicken pox and whooping cough significantly impacted on attendance, particularly in Kindergarten and Stage 1.

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 table below shows our class sizes as reported at the 2010 class size audit conducted on 19 March 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>EI</th>
<th>KH</th>
<th>KJ</th>
<th>KL</th>
<th>KM</th>
<th>S1B</th>
<th>S1C</th>
<th>S1H</th>
<th>S1K</th>
<th>S2R</th>
<th>S2/3B</th>
<th>S3E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stages 2 and 3 were restructured in July to accommodate rapid enrolment increases in these areas during Term 2. S2J was formed to reduce numbers in all primary classes to an average of 25 students.

Class sizes as at 6 December 2010 appear in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>EI</th>
<th>KH</th>
<th>KJ</th>
<th>KL</th>
<th>KM</th>
<th>S1B</th>
<th>S1C</th>
<th>S1H</th>
<th>S1K</th>
<th>S2J</th>
<th>S2R</th>
<th>S23B</th>
<th>S3E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Staff Information

Staff establishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1 full time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal (teaching)</td>
<td>2 full time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Teachers</td>
<td>10 full time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time Teacher</td>
<td>5 days per fortnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>3 days per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Teacher</td>
<td>2 days per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Intervention Teacher</td>
<td>1 full time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFF Teacher</td>
<td>5 days per fortnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Guidance Officer</td>
<td>1 full time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counsellor</td>
<td>1 day per week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Manager</td>
<td>1 full time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Officer</td>
<td>1 full time + 3 hrs 49 mins per week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| School Learning Support Officer| Varies according to student need
| School Learning Support Officer – Early Intervention | 5 half days per week |
| General Assistant              | 1 day per fortnight          |

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

Our school currently does not have a staffing entitlement for a Support Teacher (Learning). The part-time teacher allocation was used to provide support for students with these additional educational needs. A site handyman is provided by Spotless.

Teacher qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools. Teachers continue to build on their professional learning through attendance at courses conducted within the school and region.

Teacher professional learning

Professional learning of all staff is a focus at John Palmer Public School. Throughout 2010 staff participated in professional learning activities based around individual teacher, school and system targets and priorities.

Our tied professional learning allocation of $10 077 was mostly expended to support teacher learning in syllabus implementation, use of ICT, welfare and equity and career development. Staff were upskilled in a number of areas including Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL), Science and Technology and the use of the Connected Classroom. An additional $2 877 of school funds was used for professional development in 21st century learning. Further tied funds of $2 400 were used to train three teachers in Live Life Well @ School. In total, just over $15 000 was expended to ensure that teachers at John Palmer PS are up to date with current trends and methodologies in teaching and learning.

Weekly school-based professional learning has been extensive and addressed many areas including:

- English – reading records, development, trial and evaluation of our spelling scope and sequence, revision of the writing scope and sequence, rubrics to assess writing, STARS program.
- Maths – assessment and reporting, Count Me In Too, problem solving.
- Technology – Eduweb, online resources, use of Interactive Whiteboards.
- PBL – new staff introduction, evaluation of current practices, development of reward systems, RISC
- Other – Asthma Management in Schools

The focus for the School Development Days was PBL, resuscitation and emergency care, supporting students with learning difficulties, Live Life Well @ School and child protection.
Our performance

Achievements in the arts
Students have experienced a variety of opportunities to participate and develop their skills in all areas of the performing arts. Additions to our programs during 2010 include a junior dance group and junior choir.

Excellence in the performing arts has been supported by a dedicated group of parents, community members and staff. More than 50% of our students participate in one or more of our performing arts groups.

Highlights in 2010 include:

• The senior choir, band and junior dance groups performed at the Hills Performing Arts concert.
• The recorder ensemble performed at the Festival of Instrumental Music at the Sydney Opera House.
• The band, senior choir and recorder ensemble performed at Rouse Hill Town Centre and Stanhope Shopping Village to celebrate Education Week and Seniors Week.

Programs for gifted and talented students
An increased number of students in Years 3-6 participated in the International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (ICAS) which included Computer Skills, Science, Mathematics, Spelling, English and Writing. A number of students attained credit and distinction awards across all subject areas.

Stage 2 and 3 students were part of a spelling competition at school and four students were then chosen to represent John Palmer PS at the Regional Premier’s Spelling Bee.

A small group of Stage 3 students won the Stanhope Shopping Village ‘Surf and Turf’ art competition and received $3 000 worth of art and craft supplies for the school for their efforts.

Five students from Year 6 participated in Glenwood High School’s gifted and talented challenge, The GR8 GATsby. These students participated in teams of mixed ages to solve a variety of challenges from a range of key learning areas. It introduced these students to their high school peers and the academic opportunities available.
Sport
Throughout 2010, students from Kindergarten to Year 6 have been involved in regular sport. Kindergarten and Stage 1 have participated in gross motor activities while students in Stages 2 and 3 have been developing their skills in organised games.

2010 also saw our continued participation in the Ridges PSSA Zone competitions. We took part in Newcombe Ball during winter PSSA and Auskick in summer PSSA. We entered junior and senior teams into the competitions with the students representing our school proudly and enjoying playing against other local schools. Our Boys Newcombe Ball team were premiers and the Girls Newcombe Ball team were runners-up. Next year we hope to be able to enter further teams into the PSSA competitions.

Once again John Palmer PS was able to take part in swimming, cross country and athletics carnivals. We sent a group of students to represent our school at Ridges Zone carnivals, with one student progressing to the Sydney West Area carnival for swimming and three progressing for athletics. As our school continues to grow in size, we hope to see more of our students advancing to the zone and area carnivals.

In Term 3 over 80 students took part in swim school which was held at Norwest Carlile pool. Over two weeks of intensive lessons we saw many of our students, who were non-swimmers, finish the fortnight with new skills and an awareness of water safety rules.

We have also been able to offer our students sporting clinics for cricket, AFL and basketball. The clinics focused on the skills required for these sports as well as enjoyment gained from participation.

Our students again participated in the Premier’s Sporting Challenge. This year we had approximately 190 students involved in the challenge, with the students of eight classes reaching the gold medal level and three classes reaching the diamond level.

Academic achievement in national testing
In the National Assessment Program, the results across 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 the assessments.

Year 3: from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest for Year 3)
Year 5: from Band 3 (lowest) to band 8 (highest for Year 5)

Twenty students in both Years 3 and 5 from John Palmer PS sat for the tests in 2010. Five Year 5 students were matched as having completed NAPLAN in Year 3 at John Palmer Public School. One student was absent from the test.
Literacy – Year 3 NAPLAN
Twenty Year 3 students sat for the Literacy tests with 25% of these students enrolling at John Palmer Public School during Terms 1 and 2. Results were below both state and national averages except for grammar and punctuation.

Our girls outperformed the boys and the state and national averages in spelling and writing. Students from English speaking backgrounds performed better than students from non-English speaking backgrounds which make up 70% of our Year 3 cohort.

Year 3 strengths were in identifying punctuation, using commas and recognising verbs. Further development is needed in using background knowledge to interpret information, recognising the purpose of a text features, using paragraphing and writing complex sentences (refer Targets 1 and 2, p.17).

Literacy – Year 5 NAPLAN
Twenty students completed all aspects of the Literacy tests. Our results were consistently above state and national averages in Bands 6 and 7 for reading, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Writing equalled the state average and reading was slightly below.

Boys outperformed the girls across all areas of Literacy. Thirteen percent of our boys were in the top band for writing compared to 8% of the state. Students from English speaking backgrounds performed better than students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Only 25% of this student cohort was at John Palmer Public School in Year 3. Growth from Year 3 to Year 5 for these students in grammar and punctuation was almost 20 points higher than the state. Other areas were below state growth.

Year 5 performed particularly well in questions that link information across two sections of a report, identifying synonyms and recognising the author’s purpose. Further development in Year 5 is needed in generalising about a character, interpreting the effect of a character’s words, the organisation of narrative features and the construction of structurally sound and meaningful sentences (refer Target 2 p.17).
**Numeracy – Year 3 NAPLAN**

Compared to number, patterns and algebra, results were slightly higher in data, measurement, space and geometry.

Our girls were above the state average in Numeracy with 25% in the top band compared to 13% of the state. Seventy five percent of our students were in the top three bands. Students from English speaking backgrounds outperformed students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Year 3 showed an excellent understanding of data when interpreting column graphs and in 2-digit division with remainders. Further development is needed in addition and multiplication using money, identifying 4-sided shapes, telling time using an analogue clock and interpreting a simple timetable (refer Target 3 p. 18).

**Numeracy – Year 5 NAPLAN**

Year 5 results in Numeracy show that we were below the state and national averages for Band 8, however, we were slightly above these for Band 7. None of our students were in the lowest band compared to 4% for the state.

Students from both English and non-English speaking backgrounds performed at a similar level. Boys outperformed girls with results being close to the state average in Band 8 and above state average in Band 7. Girls were well above the state and national averages in Band 6.

In numeracy, Year 5 showed an excellent understanding of data when interpreting column and sector graphs and in 2-digit number/remainder division. Further development is needed in converting time units, shape tessellation and identifying symmetrical design (refer Target 3 p.18).

**National benchmarks**

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 overleaf.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 3 students achieving at and above minimum standard</th>
<th>Percentage of Year 5 students achieving at and above minimum standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Because exempted students are included with students not meeting the minimum standard the percentages above will not necessarily correspond with those reported in the band percentage charts.
Aboriginal education
At John Palmer PS:
• Aboriginal education is embedded into all Key Learning Areas, with a particular focus on the significance of culture, languages, history and experiences of Aboriginal people across NSW.
• Aboriginal cultures and custodianship of Country are recognised through protocols such as recitation of Acknowledgement of Country at all assemblies and the flying of the Aboriginal flag.
• Our staff is committed to the achievement of increased learning outcomes for Aboriginal students and will develop personalised learning plans for all Aboriginal students enrolled at John Palmer Public School.

Multicultural education
All language backgrounds are accepted and celebrated at John Palmer PS and aspects of multiculturalism are explicitly and implicitly incorporated in class programs.
• The English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher was employed for two days per week, targeting Phase 1 students from Kindergarten to Year 3.
• Harmony Day was celebrated in March to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of the diverse cultures that exist within the school and community. Students participated in a range of activities designed to highlight aspects of culture and emphasise the importance of harmonious society. Students created artworks, participated in discussions about different cultures and learnt poems about acceptance.
• An Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) was available on site throughout the year to investigate complaints of a racial or discriminatory nature.
• Interpreters were available for interviews and meetings.

Respect and responsibility
Respect for self, others and property, as well as responsibility for individual actions form the basis of our Student Welfare Policy at John Palmer PS. Core values are explicitly taught in every classroom and the school holds an expectation that these values will be upheld by every student in the school and supported by the community.

The following activities assisted our students to become citizens who demonstrate the values of integrity, respect, cooperation, care, democracy, excellence, responsibility, participation and fairness:
• Explicit teaching of the elements of the school’s anti-bullying policy.
• Delivery of values education through either scripture or non-scripture.
• Continued support of Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL).
• Recognition of Australian values through the raising of the Australian, NSW, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags each day.
• SRC fundraising activities for charity.
• Planned celebrations to acknowledge ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day.
Information Communication Technology (ICT)
Staff had the opportunity to participate in a number of professional learning opportunities to further develop the use of ICT in the classroom. These included using Eduweb, BlogEd, Smart Notebook, documentary film making and other tools. With the purchase of a number of digital video cameras and a MacBook Pro, staff and students have increased the use of digital media within the classroom. As a result students are now utilising a number of different skills in the presentation and development of their class work.

Norwest Community of Schools
The Norwest Community of Schools was established in 2009 and John Palmer PS has been an active participant throughout the establishment process. A school representative attends regular organisational meetings to discuss strategies to improve teaching, learning and social skills throughout the school communities. The learning community has provided opportunities for staff to be involved in middle school initiatives covering areas such as curriculum, high-school transition and teacher professional learning. Parent seminars have been held to provide information to the community on topics including supporting students’ literacy skills.

School and community initiatives
In connection with Landcom, our Walking School Bus® was launched in 2009 and continues to run with two bus routes. A third route is planned for 2011. These buses are only able to be run will the help of our parent volunteers.

The Ponds Community Development Program also generously provided the annual Mothers Day and Fathers Day breakfast for parents and students. The students enjoyed sharing an early morning with their parents while the delicious food was prepared by our parent volunteers. Landcom also held a family fun day in March. The highlight of this day was the land boat race which attracted numerous entries from students and our original team of teachers.

Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL)
Throughout 2010, the PBL framework has continued to guide our decision making at John Palmer Public School. PBL is a proactive discipline model that is based on the assumption that desirable behaviours should be explicitly taught. PBL is a system of school-wide processes and individualised instruction to prevent and decrease problem behaviour and to reinforce appropriate behaviour. This behaviour model is supported by Western Sydney Region and the majority of our staff has been trained in PBL procedures by expert personnel. All classroom and playground behavioural plans are linked to our three expectations, ‘Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be a Learner’. We are in the third year of a five year implementation process.

By the end of 2010 we had:
- Introduced new staff members to the PBL model, philosophies and systems through the introduction of an induction booklet and a series of professional development sessions with the assistance of the school’s PBL coach.
- Analysed data to inform decision making and to identify behavioural strengths and weaknesses throughout the school.
- Designed lessons that explicitly teach the desired student behaviour and expectations for every setting within the school.
- Developed a reward system that promotes positive student behaviour in the playground, STAR (Stop, Think and Remember) Awards.
- Obtained a score of 100% in the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET). This is an evaluation completed by an external assessor.
Support for learning
The school has a well established Learning Support Team (LST) that respond to the needs of referred students for academic, social, behavioural or physical needs. The team meets regularly to monitor the learning needs of all students. Class teachers, parents, school learning support officers and other professionals attend meetings on a needs basis.

The Learning Support Program provided essential support for students experiencing difficulty achieving desired outcomes in literacy, with a special focus on developing reading skills. So that students across the full range of classes could be supported in a time-effective way, literacy support was delivered through small-group programs of instruction which complemented and was additional to the classroom literacy program. The program had an early intervention focus with the younger students benefitting from the provision of more frequent support. Timetabling of sessions and the composition of groups varied to cater for changing needs and to recognise the achievement of students.

What have our learning support programs achieved?
• Stage 1 students receiving learning support showed improvement in their reading levels with at least half demonstrating significant improvement, and five not requiring support beyond Semester 1.
• The focus for Stage 2 was reading and comprehension. Student skills are slowly improving.
• Forty one students have been provided with intensive ESL instruction, focusing on oral language, reading comprehension and writing.

These programs rewarded both students and teachers with deep levels of personal satisfaction as the results showed student success towards mastering the complexities of written language.

Other learning support initiatives:
• Development of a data base of students receiving support which can be monitored and updated throughout the child’s education at JPPS.
• Development of an electronic referral system of students who are causing concern.

Reading Blitz
The Reading Blitz program commenced in Term 4 to provide additional support to those students identified as requiring further assistance in reading. It is an intensive one on one program aimed at improving the comprehension and fluency of those students involved. It is primarily run by parent volunteers and Stage 3 students, which promotes both a positive relationship with the parent community as well as giving students the opportunity to develop their leadership skills.

Rock and Water
Stage 3 students participated in the Rock and Water program as part of a high school transition program. This enabled students the opportunity to become familiar with a staff member of Glenwood High School whilst learning strategies to cope with conflict and socio-environmental stresses. The program has been very successful with positive feedback from the students involved.

Get Lost Mr Scary
Get Lost Mr Scary is a cognitive behavioural program that helps young children and their families develop skills to cope with fears and worries. It uses parent training and play therapy involving the use of puppets, miniature toys, role play, rhymes and drawing to enhance children's strategies to manage their thinking.

Get Lost Mr Scary uses two psychologists as facilitators, ensuring that it is a very intensive program. John Palmer Public School is committed to the ongoing implementation of Get Lost Mr Scary as there is strong evidence to support the need for early intervention approaches in mental health. Our 2010 Stage 1 group members achieved outstanding results. In all cases, anxiety was reduced and coping skills increased resulting in improved classroom participation and learning. Parents also noted great improvements in attitude at home. A Get Lost Mr Scary group is planned for 2011 for Stage 1 students who qualify for the intervention (refer Target 5 p.18)
Reflecting on our goals for 2010

Progress on targets

Target 1 – Literacy (reading)
All students will achieve at or beyond identified benchmarks in reading.
Kindergarten RR8
Year 1 RR24+
Year 2 RR30+
Year 3 RR30+
Year 4 RR30+
Year 5 Independent
Year 6 Independent

Our achievements include:
• 80% of Kindergarten students are reading at RR8 or beyond. 26% of Kindergarten students are reading beyond RR15.
• 83% of Year 1 students are reading at levels between 18 and 24. 36% are reading at levels beyond 24.
• 39% of Year 2 students are reading beyond RR30. 68% are reading between RR28 and RR30.
• 57% of Year 3 and 4 students are reading beyond RR30 and 87% of Year 5 and 6 students are reading at an independent adult level.

Target 2 – Literacy (writing)
Kindergarten - students will be competent in the construction of at least two simple related sentences.
End Stage 1 - students will be competent in the construction of at least four related complex sentences.
End Stage 2 - students will be competent in the construction of at least two related paragraphs containing complex sentences.
End Stage 3 - students will consistently write using complex sentences and related paragraphs.

In order to support this target we have:
• Purchased PM Writing Exemplars Emergent and Level 4 to guide teachers in the explicit teaching of text types.
• Implemented the ‘Sentence a Day’ program to encourage students to write every day in order to improve sentence construction.
• Adjusted the school’s Writing Scope and Sequence to match the PM Exemplars across the stages.
• Started developing assessment rubrics for each text type across the stages to encourage consistency of teacher judgement and to facilitate assessment for A to E grading.
• Procedures for the collection of data need to be developed in order to provide accurate information about student progress.

Target 3 – Numeracy (number)
Kindergarten - students will have attained Count Me In Too (CMIT) perceptual level.
Year 1 – students will have attained CMIT figurative level.
Year 2 – students will have attained CMIT facile level.
Student ability to work mathematically through problem solving will improve in Stages 2 and 3.
Assessment information will be used effectively to inform teaching and learning programs.

• Ninety three percent of Kindergarten students attained the target CMIT level of perceptual or above.
• Eighty four percent of our Year 1 had attained CMIT figurative level or above by the end of Term 2.
• Forty five percent of Year 2 had attained the target level of facile by the end of Term 2. The expectation of Western Sydney Region is that all students in Year 2 would have mastered counting on level by the end of the year. Ninety three percent of our Year 2 students had achieved this level by the end of Semester 1.
• Our problem solving program in which the working mathematically strand is explicitly taught, continued in 2010. In Year 3 NAPLAN, 31% of the numeracy questions were problem solving questions. Sixty four percent of our students correctly answered these problems and this was on target with the state average. Addition and subtraction problems involving reasoning posed the most difficult for students. Year 5 were required to solve ten problem type questions. Eighty percent were correctly answered by our students, placing us above state average. Fractions, decimals, multiplication and division problems caused the most difficulty.
• Best Start numeracy information is used to inform programs for Kindergarten students. The introduction of standardised numeracy testing for Stages 1-3 will allow teachers to track student progress and plan more effectively to meet their needs.
Target 4 – Connected Learning
All students have access to a connected classroom
All students have access to a networked computer
Improved access to information through technology (including Next Generation Education Network)
Improved presentation of teaching and learning programs and showcase items using technology

Our achievements include:
• Each classroom has access to networked computers.
• All classes have weekly access to a mini lab in the library.
• Teachers and students using interactive technologies to increase student engagement and motivation.
• ClickView programs are accessible in all classrooms.
• Staff have increased use of resources available through Centre for Learning Innovation and TaLE.
• A Connected Classroom has been installed and staff has been trained on its effective use.
• A further three Interactive Whiteboards have provided an access ratio of more than one IWB between two classes.

Target 5 – Student Engagement and Retention
Increased number of students participating in extra-curricular activities
Expanded Coming to School and Transition to High School programs
Raised awareness of Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) strategy to prevent and address problem behaviour and increase the focus on learning
PBL lessons for all settings developed
Increased full day attendance and decreased partial absences, particularly lateness

Our achievements include:
• More than 50% of our students participate in extra curricular activities. A junior dance group and junior choir were added to the range of activities on offer for students this year.
• Stage 3 students were involved in a number of middle school programs including Rock and Water, Year 7 Orientation, WINGS, and The GR8 GATsby.
• Almost 98% of our Kindergarten 2011 cohort participated in our ‘Coming to School’ program.
• PBL information has been incorporated into school information packs and also discussed at the ‘Coming to School’ program. Lessons have been developed for all stages for the explicit teaching of behavioural expectations in all settings.
• Full day attendance is very pleasing at 95.8%. This is above that of Western Sydney Region and the state for Department of Education and Training schools. Partial absences for most children are rare but children from three families continue to arrive late on most days. Targeted interventions for these students will continue.

Key Evaluations
It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2010, our school carried out evaluations of Teaching and English (Stage 1 Literacy Centres).

Teaching
Background
At John Palmer Public School we are preparing students to live and work in the 21st century. Our students will spend their adult lives in a multifaceted, multitasking, diverse, technology driven world where confidence and creativity are essential. We need to equip our young people with the knowledge, understanding, skills and values to take advantage of opportunities and face the challenges that living in this era will bring.

Throughout 2010, the executive and several class teachers have attended a number of workshops on the implications these changes will have on teaching and learning at John Palmer Public School. Our teaching staff was also surveyed on their understanding of and ability to use thinking tools and emerging technologies and their growing role within the classroom.

Findings and conclusions
Much of our traditional teaching has focused on giving students facts to memorise rather than problems to solve. To live and work effectively and successfully in the 21st century, our students will need to:
• approach problem solving in new and creative ways.
• be highly skilled in the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT).

The majority of our students have sound literacy and numeracy skills. Most teachers are aware of some tools that students can use to support their thinking skills but further substantial professional learning is required. Several teachers use thinking tools within their classroom, particularly in literacy groups. However, most students at John
Palmer PS have limited capacity to think deeply and logically to solve problems as they have not been explicitly taught how to use thinking tools to support their learning.

Our students and staff are generally well equipped to use existing school-based technology at a satisfactory level of competence. Significant training of staff is required to enable explicit teaching of emerging technologies such as blogs, wikis, moodling and multimedia presentations.

**Future directions**

Literacy, numeracy and knowledge of key disciplines will remain the cornerstone of our teaching and learning programs. Our programs must also support the development of social interaction, cross-disciplinary thinking and the use of digital media (refer Target 4 p.18). In order for this to occur, staff at John Palmer PS will:

- work within the Norwest Community of Schools to develop teacher skills in the application of thinking tools to learning.
- embed thinking tools into units of work in Human Society and Its Environment and Science and Technology and explicitly teach students how to use them.
- provide professional learning for teachers in the area of emerging technologies.
- make purchases to support emerging technologies.

**English – Stage 1 literacy centres**

**Background**

The teaching of reading in several of the Stage 1 classes during 2010 has occurred in the form of literacy centres. The 12 groups in which students were placed were fluid as students were observed daily, formally tested as needed and moved groups as appropriate.

Involved in these groups were the class teachers, the learning support teacher and numerous parent helpers. During the reading hour students engaged in independent reading, guided reading and completed an activity based on the book. These activities were based on the multiple intelligence concepts and were aimed at encouraging and developing a range of learning styles.

**Findings**

Students, teachers and parents involved in literacy centres were surveyed on their experience and their perception of the success of the groups from a teaching and learning perspective.

Of the parents surveyed the majority had a positive view of literacy centres and found them enjoyable. They felt that they adequately provided meaningful activities and reading resources for the students to develop their reading and comprehension skills. Parents found that the activities they were helping with were explained well and that their input was valued by the teachers and students.

Most students surveyed found literacy centres enjoyable. They felt the books chosen for them were suited to their learning and helped to improve their reading and comprehension skills. The majority of students felt that their teacher regularly let them know how they were going and felt they were improving.

The majority of teachers surveyed indicated that literacy centres were enjoyable. They felt the books chosen were always suited to student learning and were helping students to improve their reading and comprehension skills. The teachers felt that because of the high adult:student ration, there was always someone available to assist students and were grateful to the parent helpers for their input.

- The average growth of Year 1 students involved in literacy centres was eight levels while the average growth across all of Year 1 was seven levels.
- The highest growth of a Year 1 student was thirteen levels and the lowest growth was three levels.
- The average growth of Year 2 students whether or not they were involved in literacy centres was seven levels.
- The highest growth of a Year 2 student was twelve levels and the lowest growth of a year 2 student was one level.

**Conclusions**

Literacy centres have provided extremely individualised teaching and learning to all students due to the high adult:student ratio. In addition to academic success, literacy groups provided students with many new and interesting social opportunities. This has helped to create a very nurturing, caring and safe environment. There was no significant difference between the progress of students participating in literacy centres and those who did not.

**Future Directions**

The teaching of reading in Stage 1 will continue to focus on individual student ability and need. This may continue in the form of literacy groups if appropriate for the 2011 cohort of Stage 1 students and teachers.
Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction
In late 2010, the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about our operations.

An online survey was randomly sent to one third of our parents, all students in Years 2-6 and all teachers. The aim was to gather information on general satisfaction with John Palmer PS, teacher/student relationships, relevance of schooling and student self esteem and achievement.

Although not all recipients undertook the survey, there were enough responses to see strong positive trends emerging. A summary of these are presented below:

Parent responses
“Great principal, great office staff, great teachers, extremely happy at this school.”
“Great school and teachers – love the care, interactions and attention given to the children. Thank you to all the staff at JPPS.”

Student responses
“JPPS is a happy safe place. It is an honour to be at JPPS.”
“JPPS is a great place to be and I learn a lot from the teachers.”
“The teachers are wonderful and our principal is very fair. She treats everyone the same.”

Staff responses
“JPPS is a lovely place to work where the students appear to be happy and well adjusted. I feel that all students are learning at their own rate and being challenged appropriately in the school.”

Whilst the overwhelming majority of comments were extremely positive, several parents were not pleased about the mid-year restructure of Years 3-6 due to sudden growth in student numbers. Unfortunately, this is an aspect of a new and rapidly growing school that will likely continue for the foreseeable future.

Clarification about our reward system, homework expectations, stage expectations and communicating with working parents were also raised. Information about these will be provided to parents in 2011.
Planning and targets for 2011

Below is a summary of our plans and targets for 2011. More comprehensive information is available in the School Plan 2009-2011 which may be viewed at the school office.

Target 1 – Literacy (reading)
All students will achieve at or beyond identified benchmarks in reading.

- Kindergarten RR10+
- Year 1 RR24+
- Year 2 RR30+
- Year 3 RR30+
- Year 4 RR30+
- Year 5 Independent
- Year 6 Independent

Strategies to achieve this target include:
- Trial of benchmarks to be achieved at the end of each semester by each grade
- Trial of benchmarking activities to track student progress beyond RR30
- Highly structured and explicitly taught phonics program for Kindergarten students
- Purchase of Reading Eggs, including online home component for Kindergarten students and those students ‘at risk’ in Years 1 and 2
- Targeted, explicit teaching of comprehension strategies using the JPPS STARS scope and sequence focusing on finding the main idea, recalling facts and details and understanding sequence
- Use of 0.4 of part time teacher allocation to support identified students
- Analysis of student and school NAPLAN data to develop individualised learning programs

Our success will be measured by:
- Student learning tracked accurately beyond RR30
- Reporting to parents and the community is accurate and relevant
- All students achieving at or beyond the following benchmarks:
  - Kindergarten RR10+
  - Year 1 RR24+
  - Year 2 RR30+
  - Year 3 RR30+
  - Year 4 RR30+
  - Year 5 Independent
  - Year 6 Independent
- Students use a range of strategies to decode unfamiliar texts – phonemic awareness, sight word knowledge, contextual clues, picture cues, reading ahead, re-reading
- Increase in borrowing from the library for recreational purposes
- Classroom practice demonstrates Quality Teaching Elements embedded in programs and delivery
- Teaching and learning activities accurately reflect student need

Target 2 – Literacy (writing)

Kindergarten - competent in the construction of at least two simple related sentences.
End Stage 1 - competent in the construction of at least four related complex sentences.
End Stage 2 - competent in the construction of at least two related paragraphs containing complex sentences.
End Stage 3 - students will consistently write using complex sentences and related paragraphs.

Strategies to achieve this target include:
- Targeted explicit teaching of text type, text form and text structure
- Explicit teaching of grammar and sentence structure through ‘Sentence a Day’ in all classrooms
- Development of assessment tasks and a means of tracking student growth
- Use of 0.4 of part time teacher allocation to support identified students
- Teacher professional learning
- Purchase of extra copies of PM Writing Teacher Resource books

Our success will be measured by:
- Writing being taught explicitly and systematically through whole class, small group and individual experiences
- The teaching and learning program for writing of every teacher will incorporate shared, guided and independent writing activities.
• Kindergarten - students will be competent in the construction of at least two simple related sentences.
• End Stage 1 - students will be competent in the construction of at least four related complex sentences.
• End Stage 2 - students will be competent in the construction of at least two related paragraphs containing complex sentences.
• End Stage 3 - students will consistently write using complex sentences and related paragraphs.
• Classroom practice demonstrates Quality Teaching Elements embedded in programs and delivery

Target 3 – Numeracy (number)
Kindergarten - students will have attained CMIT perceptual level.
Year 1 - students will have attained CMIT figurative level.
Year 2 - students will have attained facile level.
Student ability to work mathematically through problem solving will improve in Stages 2 and 3.
Assessment information will be used effectively to inform teaching and learning programs.

Strategies to achieve this target include:
• Kindergarten and Year 1 teachers use Best Start information to inform teaching and learning programs
• Use of Nelson Numeracy Assessment tasks to accurately assess and monitor student learning in Stages 1-3
• Whole school problem solving program
• Continue work on creation of Count Me In Too resources
• Teacher professional learning

Our success will be measured by:
• Kindergarten - students will have attained CMIT perceptual level.
• Year 1 - students will have attained CMIT figurative level.
• Year 2 - students will have attained facile level.
• Student ability to work mathematically through problem solving will improve in Stages 2 and 3.
• Assessment information will be used effectively to inform teaching and learning programs.
• Students able to demonstrate their understanding at the ‘high’ and ‘outstanding’ levels

Target 4 – 21st Century Teaching and Learning
Improve student outcomes through Quality Teaching with an emphasis on:
• innovative use of interactive technologies
• student use of thinking tools

Strategies to achieve this target include:
• Purchase of three more soft touch interactive whiteboards (IWBs) for classroom use
• Development of a K-6 scope and sequence for thinking and technology learning
• Shared professional learning across the Norwest Community of Schools with an emphasis on thinking tools, connected learning and emerging technologies
• Embedding at least one thinking tool and at least one digital technology component into every HSIE and Science and Technology unit

Our success will be measured by:
• All teachers and students using interactive technologies to increase student engagement and motivation in learning
• At least half of our teachers establishing connected learning opportunities with other schools
• 95% of the community using technology as one of the main avenues for accessing information about the school and its programs

Target 5 – Student Engagement and Retention
Decreased partial absences, particularly lateness

Strategies to achieve this target include:
• Teacher professional learning on strategies to improve punctuality
• Refinement of school attendance policy
• Targeted school based intervention for families of students who are habitually late

Our success will be measured by:
• Decrease in partial absences (lateness)
• ‘Get Lost M Scary’ program offered to targeted Year One students

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About this report
I would like to thank the members of the school self-evaluation committee for assisting in the preparation of this report.

2010 committee members were:
Lynda Balfour (Parent and Community Representative)
Deborah Blackwell (Principal)
Joanne Gilmour (School Administrative Manager)
Gayle Henwood (Assistant Principal)
Casey Horner (Teacher)
Tracey Roberts (Teacher)
Sharon Wunschel (P&C President)

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 the targets for the school’s future development.

Deborah Blackwell
Principal

School contact information
John Palmer Public School
85 The Ponds Boulevard
The Ponds NSW 2769
☎ 8882 9480
✉ 8882 9479
✉ johnpalmer-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

School code: 4648