

Merriwa Central School

Annual Report



2016



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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2016 is provided to the community of Merriwa Central School as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.

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Principal

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Message from the Principal

Merriwa Central School provides quality education for all students, with a focus on each student achieving their potential. Broadening horizons of both students and parents is a key strategic direction of our school plan through the Empower Program. The opportunity for Year 7 students and parents to visit the University of New England and explore career options together was highly successful.

The Early Action for Success (EaFS) program enabled teachers K–2 to provide quality, individual instruction to students in Literacy and Numeracy, in a supportive learning environment. The program led to significant improvement in learning outcomes for Kindergarten and Year 1 students.

Staff and students participated in Choose Maths initiatives, a federally funded project to improve engagement in mathematics. Merriwa Central School participated in the pilot program, which aims to support the teaching of mathematics through quality professional development for teachers.

Our school enrolment of 280 students continues to buck the trend, recording the highest growth in enrolment for a public school in the Hunter between 2012–2016 of 21%. The strong growth in student enrolments demonstrates the confidence of the Merriwa community in their local school.

School background

School vision statement

Merriwa Central School is a small rural school serving a low socio-economic community. Our focus on quality teaching aims to ensure all students can achieve their true potential. Our banner statement “Valuing individual potential – achieving personal best” embodies this vision.

School context

Merriwa Central School is a K–12 school (280 students including 55 Aboriginal students) located within a supportive community in the Upper Hunter. It caters to students from the local town and villages servicing a largely rural community. It is one of the oldest schools in the State and was one of the first National Schools established in 1850. Merriwa Central School is unique in several respects. Firstly it is the only central school in the Hunter Central Coast region, and secondly it is one of four central schools in the State with a separate primary and secondary campus. The primary enrolment of 140 students is divided into 6 classes, the majority of which are multigrade. Some classes are also across stage. The secondary enrolment of 138 is divided into classes of the same year or stage group. In some cases the class may consist of the entire enrolment for that year group. Students are taught a wide variety of subjects delivered by classroom teachers, through video conference, by distance education and at TAFE on the Muswellbrook Campus. The Upper Hunter Trade Training Centre is a joint facility in collaboration with Scone High School, Muswellbrook High School and Scone Grammar School. The Merriwa Campus enables students to complete Certificate II in Hospitality, as well as Certificate II in Metal and Engineering. The Early Action for Success (EaFS) initiative aims to improve students' performance through a targeted approach in the early years K–2. Geographic, cultural and socioeconomic disadvantage are issues for our students in a region which is dominated by the coal and electricity generation industries.

Self-assessment and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, school achievements and the next steps to be pursued.

This year our school undertook self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework. The framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

In the domain of Learning, we continue to focus on curriculum, learning and wellbeing. Due to an increasing number of students presenting with a range of wellbeing needs this has required the school to review its processes and procedures, and available resources to meet their needs.

In the domain of Teaching, the focus has been on the implementation of the Performance and Development Framework for all teaching staff.

In the domain of Leading, our efforts have focused on the implementation of the new school planning procedures 2015–2017.

Our self-assessment process will assist the school to refine the strategic priorities in our School Plan, leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-the-department/our-reforms/school-excellence-framework>

Strategic Direction 1

Quality teaching

Purpose

Quality teaching with an emphasis on high expectations and student engagement.

Quality teaching and learning ensures every student is actively engaged in meaningful and challenging learning experiences to achieve and thrive as learners, leaders and community members. Teachers are supported in a collaborative environment to systematically and strategically review their progress based on evidence, self-reflection and feedback.

Overall summary of progress

Engagement of students in numeracy activities with a focus on working mathematically skills development and hands on learning. The Quicksmart program has been highly successful in re-engaging students who struggle with numeracy, building confidence for them to be successful learners in mainstream classes.

Professional development for mathematics teachers through participation in the national Choose Maths program has provided invaluable resources, programming, assessment and learning activities for classroom teachers. The Yr 7 –12 Maths Problem Solving workshop provided a wonderful extension opportunity for secondary students to build teamwork and critical thinking skills.

All staff participated in the Performance and Development processes and completed individual plans consistent with the teaching standards and school strategic directions. Learning goals were established, monitored and adapted through a collaborative process throughout the learning cycle. Teachers began to use PDP's to inform and reflect on professional learning.

All full-time teachers achieved the annual milestone of completing the annual professional development review, and had feedback from their supervisors as part of the process.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
Targeted students demonstrate growth in numeracy skills through intensive support.	Quicksmart data indicated substantial growth (effect size) based on the 52 students who participated in the program. Based on pre and post testing the greatest areas of growth – in the order of two–three years growth were in basic multiplication, multiplication and division accuracy. In terms of accuracy, the Quicksmart students average scores on Division have increased 28.492 percentage points, which indicates substantial improvement.	Quicksmart tutors Mathsonline Socio-economic background (\$133000.00)
Performance and Development Framework processes will be embedded with all staff completing PDP's.	All teaching staff completed performance and development plans and were provided support and feedback from their supervisors as part of the professional development process. Teachers systematically reviewed their classroom practice in a collegial environment with their peers and supervisor.	Release for professional development (\$10000)

Next Steps

Re-establishment of secondary mathematics network for teachers in the Upper Hunter.

Numeracy committee to review targets for 2017.

Continue to develop resources and professional learning through engagement in Choose Maths program.

Teaching staff will further reflect on classroom practice and commence the second year of implementation of the full Performance and Development cycle.

Processes will need to be reviewed to support casual teachers with the Performance and Development process.

Strategic Direction 2

Wellbeing of students and staff

Purpose

The wellbeing of every student is a priority. A whole school focus on wellbeing will enhance student engagement and reinvigorate staff. A collegial work environment supports staff to provide a range of rich learning experiences to students whilst maintaining an appropriate work life balance.

Overall summary of progress

Professional development has occurred over the past 12 months to implement the new Sentral software. In Term 4 2015 the Sentral committee was established to oversee the introduction of Sentral and support staff in its operation and implementation. Attendance procedures have changed and the school has moved away from manual rolls, to online marking through Sentral. The implementation of this change has enhanced real-time attendance data, and provided ease of access to attendance record for teachers, year advisers and the school learning support team to attendance records.

Student wellbeing data including positive and negative referrals has been trialled to overcome the shortfalls of paper-based systems.

Timechart software has been synchronised with Sentral to provide all staff greater access to student records, rooming and timetable information.

The Learning Support Team reviews student feedback through Tell Them From Me (TTFM) surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of student welfare programs. High demand for support from students over the past 12 months has been difficult to meet, given the shortage of school counsellors. The school has attempted to meet this shortfall through the engagement of Upper Hunter Youth Workers to support students and families.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
Learning Support Team monitors students attendance using Sentral to improve attendance rates.	All staff have completed professional development in the use of Sentral, and a timeline has been developed for its implementation. The Learning Support Team now have access to a greater range of student attendance and wellbeing data and are able to identify students requiring support, and put systems in place to address their needs.	Sentral software Release Socio-economic background (\$10000.00)
TTFM data indicates students feel supported at school and have someone who consistently provides encouragement and who they can turn to for advice.	Learning Support Team reviews TTFM survey data to inform the evaluation of student welfare programs and the effectiveness of teaching and learning programs., to assist in planning for the year ahead. Students indicated they have someone at school who consistently provided encouragement and who they can turn to for advice (advocacy). Advocacy in primary was rated 6.4 out of 10 by girls, and 6.2 out of 10 by boys. Advocacy in secondary was rated 6.7 out of 10 by girls, and 7.3 out of 10 by boys. The highest rates of advocacy were Yr 12 students with 8.1 out of 10 students.	Learning and Support Team TTFM Coordinator Socio-economic background (\$2000.00)

Next Steps

Roll-out of Sentral to include period by period roll marking, and student reports.

Staff to make effective use of data collated by Sentral to regularly monitor and review student attendance and referrals.

Targeted support for students at risk provided through Western Connections program.

Collaboration with *Where There's A Will* Foundation to access professional development for teachers based on the needs of the school.

Strategic Direction 3

Enhanced Community Partnerships

Purpose

The success of every student is based upon the successful partnership between the school, parents and the broader community. A shared vision ensures continued community confidence in Merriwa Central School and its students. The school is embraced by the community with a shared vision and advocacy.

Overall summary of progress

Broadening horizons of our students and parents is a critical component of our community partnership.

The Empower Program was established in 2016 to provide a pathway for students and parents to investigate career and educational opportunities beyond their own experiences in a small country town. The program is similar to one previously established called *Making Education Goals Sustainable* (MEGS) in conjunction with the University of Newcastle. The key to success with the Empower Program is to engage parents and students together, so that conversations around career opportunities occur at home and at school.

Whilst it continues to be a struggle to engage all parents the program focuses on key transition points for students in Year 7 and Year 10.

Engagement of parents in Year 10 preparing for senior school has been highly successful, with 100% of parents attending. One of the key features of this process has been the success of the school based traineeship program.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
Students and parents develop greater awareness of academic and vocational opportunities.	60% of Year 7 students attended the excursion to the University of New England and were supported by family members. Feedback from students and parents was overwhelmingly positive.	Subsidised travel Socio-economic background (\$10000.00)
	100% of Year 10 students attended subject selection interviews with parents and developed a greater understanding of academic and vocational opportunities available in Years 11 and 12.	

Next Steps

Expand the Empower Program to include the University of Newcastle.

Introduce careers awareness in K-6.

Support Aboriginal students to take up employment and scholarship opportunities.

Organise a TAFE/industry visit for parents and students in Years 8 and 9.

Key Initiatives	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
Aboriginal background loading	<p>NAPLAN results indicate above State average growth for Aboriginal students in</p> <p>Year 5 – reading, spelling, grammar and punctuation</p> <p>Year 7 – numeracy</p> <p>Year 9 – reading, spelling, grammar and punctuation and numeracy</p>	<p>Individual support</p> <p>Cultural workshops</p> <p>Transport subsidy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal background loading (\$46 000.00)
Low level adjustment for disability	<p>Professional development provided by Learning and Support Teacher assisted staff to make adjustments to teaching programs. Programs and assessment tasks modified to meet the needs of individual students.</p>	<p>Learning and support teacher</p> <p>Release time</p> <p>Professional development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level adjustment for disability (\$12 000.00)
Socio–economic background	<p>Pre and post testing show significant growth in mathematical skills for students who participated in the intensive support program. (Refer Strategic Direction 1 for further information)</p>	<p>Quicksmart tutors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio–economic background (\$135 000.00)
Support for beginning teachers	<p>Structured support provided to beginning teachers through induction programs, additional release time for planning, support of supervisor and mentor teacher, and assistance with accreditation processes.</p>	<p>Teacher mentor</p> <p>Release time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for beginning teachers (\$13 337.00)
Early Action for Success	<p>At the end of the school year 90% of Kindergarten students are reading and writing at or beyond grade level expectations. Of Year 1 students 86% are reading at, or beyond grade level, with 73% writing at or beyond grade level. Of Year 2 students 100% are reading at or beyond grade level, with 35% writing at or beyond grade level expectations. The provision of additional teaching and learning resources in K–2 has allowed for the successful implementation of L3 pedagogy in Stage 1 classrooms.</p> <p>A Language Development Partnership was delivered in collaboration with Hunter New England Health to identify and assist students with communication difficulties. A total of 25 students were assessed, and as a result 80% were supported through the Communication Partners program. At the end of the program 20% of students were referred off the program and did not require further intervention. It was recommended that the remaining 16 students access ongoing therapy to address their speech sounds, phonological awareness and language skills.</p>	<p>Interventionist teacher (0.8FTE)</p> <p>Release for professional development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAfS (\$98 000.00)

Student information

Student enrolment profile

	Enrolments			
Students	2013	2014	2015	2016
Boys	127	128	142	130
Girls	116	122	134	145

Student enrolment continues to steadily increase from year to year. Primary enrolments have increased considerably with the establishment of an additional class and appointment of a new permanent teacher. Enrolment growth between 2012–2016 is 21%.

Student attendance profile

School				
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016
K	92.2	91.7	93.6	91.6
1	92.8	92.9	89	92.2
2	89.7	94.7	94.4	86.8
3	93.9	89.9	93.7	93
4	87.3	93.6	87.8	92
5	92.6	87.5	93.2	89
6	92.2	92.3	84.5	92.6
7	90.4	94.5	91.5	90.5
8	91.7	89.6	89.7	90.2
9	84.2	90.4	88.1	88.5
10	86.6	87.3	91.2	83.1
11	86.2	87.9	86.7	85.6
12	91.2	86.4	82	85.4
All Years	89.8	90.7	89.9	89.2
State DoE				
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016
K	95	95.2	94.4	94.4
1	94.5	94.7	93.8	93.9
2	94.7	94.9	94	94.1
3	94.8	95	94.1	94.2
4	94.7	94.9	94	93.9
5	94.5	94.8	94	93.9
6	94.1	94.2	93.5	93.4
7	93.2	93.3	92.7	92.8
8	90.9	91.1	90.6	90.5
9	89.4	89.7	89.3	89.1
10	87.7	88.1	87.7	87.6
11	88.3	88.8	88.2	88.2
12	90.1	90.3	89.9	90.1
All Years	92.7	93	92.3	92.3

Management of non-attendance

The school aims to encourage regular school attendance through communication in the newsletter, phone calls home to parents and recognition in student welfare programs.

Post-school destinations

Proportion of students moving into post-school education, training or employment	Year 10%	Year 11%	Year 12%
Seeking Employment	0	0	14
Employment	0	5	50
TAFE entry	0	0	0
University Entry	0	0	21
Other	0	0	7
Unknown	0	0	7

School based traineeships continue to be highly regarded by students, parents and local employers. Many students secured full-time employment before the end of the school year due to the successful completion of a school based traineeship.

Year 12 vocational or trade training

The school operates a trade training centre in collaboration with Muswellbrook High School, Scone High School and Scone Grammar School.

Vocational subjects are popular with students, however this year many struggled to meet industry requirements. In 2016 only 40% of vocational students attained the qualification.

Year 12 attaining HSC or equivalent

Of the Year 12 students who undertook a Higher School Certificate course, 93% completed the qualification.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	2
Head Teacher(s)	3
Classroom Teacher(s)	12.25
Learning and Support Teacher(s)	1
Teacher Librarian	1
School Administration & Support Staff	7.09
Other Positions	3.6

*Full Time Equivalent

The Australian Education Regulation, 2014 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce.

Currently no staff identify as Aboriginal.

Teacher qualifications

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

Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	0

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Professional learning activities are embedded within the strategic direction of the school plan, and outlined for individual teachers in their performance and development plans. Most teachers are in their early years of teaching and completing their accreditation requirements at Proficient level.

Financial information (for schools using OASIS for the whole year)

Financial information

This summary financial information covers funds for operating costs to 30 November 2016 and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

Income	\$
Balance brought forward	628 581.00
Global funds	482 699.00
Tied funds	498 453.00
School & community sources	81 207.00
Interest	15 495.00
Trust receipts	16 492.00
Canteen	0.00
Total income	1 722 927.00
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	33 062.00
Excursions	16 562.00
Extracurricular dissections	38 289.00
Library	4 161.00
Training & development	640.00
Tied funds	473 101.00
Short term relief	94 684.00
Administration & office	69 015.00
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	66 009.00
Maintenance	41 889.00
Trust accounts	17 007.00
Capital programs	64 436.00
Total expenditure	918 855.00
Balance carried forward	804 072.00

A full copy of the school's financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance

NAPLAN

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10. The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

The My School website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing. Click on the link <http://www.myschool.edu.au> and insert the school name in the Find a school and select GO to access the school data.

The school aims to improve learning outcomes for all students, and in particular Aboriginal students. In accordance with the *Premier's Priorities: Improving education results* and *State Priorities: Better services – Improving Aboriginal education outcomes* for students in the top two NAPLAN bands.

In NAPLAN Reading and Numeracy assessment 40% of Aboriginal students in Year 9 achieved results in the top two bands exceeding the Premier's Priorities for Aboriginal students.

The percentage of all students achieving proficiency (top two bands) increased across most year groups between 2015–2016.

Year 3 – from 13% to 23% of students.

Year 5 – from 3% to 14% of students.

Year 7 – from 2% to 20% of students.

Year 9 – from 7% to 6% of students.

These results exceed the Premier's proficiency targets in most year groups.

Higher School Certificate (HSC)

The performance of students in the HSC is reported in bands ranging from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest).

Fourteen students sat for the Higher School Certificate in 2016.

Individual course data is not available due to the small cohort size of the class.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Each year schools are required to seek opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Some of their response are presented below.

In 2016 our students participated in the national Student wellbeing survey, Programme for International Assessment (PISA) data collection and Tell Them From Me (TTFM) survey.

The Student Wellbeing Survey gathered responses from 15/16 year old students. The survey included questions about young peoples social and emotional development, perserverance, engagement, physical

health and wellbeing, relationships and connectedness to others.

Student responses to levels of optimism 44% and satisfaction with life 31% were consistent with national results.

Student responses to prosocial behaviour (behaving in socially appropriate and responsible ways) 56%, compared to the national response 23%.

Student responses to connectedness with adults at school was high at 63%, compared to the national response of 52%.

Student responses to school climate (the way teachers and students interact and how students treat each other) was low 13%, compared to the national response of 34%.

Parents (20) responded to the Partners in Learning survey covering aspects of parents perceptions of their child's experiences at home and at school.

Responses were scored on a ten point scale. A score of 0 indicates strong disagreement, a score of 10 indicates strong agreement, 5 is a neutral position.

Parent response to;

Parents feel welcome scored 5.6.

Parents are informed scored 4.9.

Parents support learning at home 7.0.

Parent support for positive behaviour 6.9.

The majority of respondents indicated they had children in K–6. Given Merriwa Central School is a split site school with a separate primary and secondary campus, these factors need to be considered when reflecting on the survey results. Communication and a whole school culture remain challenges when historically the staff and community have viewed the multi-campus school as two separate schools.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Aboriginal education and an understanding of history, culture and inclusion is important to all students.

Aboriginal students were supported by regular tutors, mentors and the homework centre. The Wakagetti group enhanced the understanding of Aboriginal culture for staff and students. Primary students formed an Aboriginal dance group and performed at our annual Variety Night Concert for the first time. Students in Years 7 and 8 participated in the I-Believe program delivered by the University of Newcastle.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

Teaching and learning programs foster student understanding of cultural diversity, racism and the importance of inclusion. The school Anti-Racism Contact Officer is Mr Chad Grant.

School performances are subsidised to provide all students access to a range of cultural learning experiences.