

Birrong Public School

Annual Report



2016



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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2016 is provided to the community of Birrong Public 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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School background

School vision statement

Birrong Public School aims to create a collaborative learning environment where students, parents, teachers and the community are involved in developing life-long learners.

Our students will be motivated and critical learners. Our teachers will be knowledgeable leaders who create innovative, supportive, challenging and flexible learning environments. Our significant partnerships within the school and wider community will ensure students become confident, active members of society who have the skills to be successful in a complex and changing world.

School context

Birrong Public School provides learning opportunities for approximately 560 students. The school is located in the Bankstown Principal Network in South Western Sydney. The school caters for a diverse student population, with 86.25% of students from a language background other than English. There are currently 38 language backgrounds, with Vietnamese and Arabic speaking backgrounds the largest groups. There are a significantly higher proportion of NESB students K–4 and this trend will continue into the future.

Students, staff, parents and community members are all actively involved in the teaching and learning program. School community members feel proud to have contributed to the school program, which gives each student the opportunity to develop to his/her full potential. High standards are set and encouraged in teaching and learning programs. Opportunities for students are available in many areas including sport, music, public speaking, dance, environmental education, student leadership and camping. The school is committed to quality partnerships with parents and the community. This is achieved through strong links with the P&C Association. Birrong Public School provides a range of activities through which parents feel welcome and a part of their child's life. The parent community strongly supports the principles, which underpin public education and expect the highest quality of education for their children.

There are approximately 35 school based personnel including executive staff, classroom teachers, specialist ESL, LAS and Reading Recovery teachers, school counsellor, administrative staff and a general assistant. Birrong Public School has an uncompromising focus on teaching and learning with a dedicated staff, who have a range of teaching experience.

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. 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.

The self-assessment involved collating feedback and information from staff, community and students. Our self-assessment evidence includes data from all stakeholders, gathered through surveys (paper and online), face-to-face interviews and forums, workshops, leadership meetings and our Instructional Rounds lesson observations. Other methods used to gather data included: analysis of student achievement data and progress mapping; analysis of teaching/learning programs and other documentation (attendance and behaviour data) as well as evidence from regular classroom observations.

In the **Learning** domain our school has focused on the elements of **Learning Culture** and **Wellbeing**. As a Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) school, expectations of behaviour are explicitly taught to students and relate to the variety of school settings such as the classroom, playground, hallways, canteen and assemblies. Teaching staff understand that student engagement and learning are related and school programs address the needs of identified student groups including Aboriginal students, gifted students, students with disability and students for whom English is a second language. Evidence collected indicates we are **sustaining and growing** in **Learning Culture**.

The wellbeing of students at Birrong Public School is important and all classes participated in Lifeskills, which is a mindfulness and yoga-based program to improve students' emotional regulation and resilience. This program was well received by students and staff and is to be delivered again to all students in 2017. The school's strong attendance policy continued in 2016 and teachers worked hard to communicate its clear processes for monitoring absences. Evidence collected indicates we are **sustaining and growing** in **Wellbeing**.

In the **Teaching** domain our school has focused on the elements of **Collaborative Practice** and **Learning and**

Development. Executive, staff and stage team meetings are used to review the curriculum and to revise teaching and learning programs. Staff members regularly evaluate teaching and learning programs including the assessment of student outcomes. Cooperative planning days are utilised to identify units of work and provide teachers with the opportunity to collaborate and make adjustments to units based on the needs of students. Peer observations and feedback sessions occur regularly as part of the Performance and Development Framework implementation and whole school practices in student engagement are identified through Instructional Rounds observations. Evidence collected indicates we are **sustaining and growing** in **Collaborative Practice**.

Teachers willingly participated in professional learning targeted to school priorities and their professional needs. All teachers established their own professional development goals and participated in professional learning in formative assessment and feedback, learning intentions and success criteria, science curriculum and the wellbeing framework. The preparation for the introduction of the Geography syllabus was delivered by a team of stage representatives across the RALBee Community of Schools network, all of whom were trained by Anne Southwell (HSIE, History and Geography, Adviser). Evidence indicates we are **delivering** in **Learning and Development**.

In the **Leading** domain our school has focused on the element of **School Planning, Implementation and Reporting**. Evidence indicates we are **delivering** in this element. The staff, students, parents and broader school community actively participated in the development of the school's vision and new school plan. Our three year plan is focused on extending life long critical learners, developing quality educators and leaders and fostering supportive and collaborative partnerships.

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

Extending Lifelong Critical Learners

Purpose

To develop independent, responsible life-long learners through the provision of high quality flexible learning programs. To maximise success for all students through the development of programs to meet the academic, social and wellbeing needs of every student.

Overall summary of progress

In 2016 teachers were mentored by an executive member to support the implementation of inquiry focused learning across the school. Students developed skills in creative thinking, problem solving and risk taking through engaging lessons based on mathematical inquiry and project-based learning. Teachers are now confident to lead, implement and continue inquiry focused learning in their classroom to support the needs of all students and improve student outcomes. Students are now more engaged as they take on a more active role in their learning by collaborating, communicating and connecting with their peers.

In Term 3 the school participated in Instructional Rounds with a focus on formative assessment and feedback. Teachers from our community of schools observed lessons and provided a list of findings and recommendations to support future directions. Learning intentions and success criteria (LISC) continued to be utilised across the school with 75% of classrooms clearly displaying and referring to LISC. Teachers provided explicit feedback to students on how to improve their learning and provided opportunities for students to engage in peer assessments. Students are now developing a deeper understanding of what they are learning, why it is important and how they can maximise their success.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
Teaching programs contain effective feedback and formative assessment processes across all Key Learning Areas.	LISC evident in all classrooms and programs. This is reflected in the findings of Instructional Rounds where 16 classes were observed. LISC is discussed in stage meetings and differentiated accordingly.	\$5 000
100% of all teaching staff incorporate quality assessment and feedback in daily practice.	Mentoring practices focus on formative assessment and feedback. There is a strong culture of staff discussing visible learning in the classroom. PDPs support observation of LISC and personal learning goals with teachers providing evidence to support their performance.	\$80 000

Next Steps

- Embed effective, consistent and strategic teacher professional learning in the focus area of teacher feedback. Teachers need to develop a deep understanding of effective feedback which is an essential precursor to the implementation of peer feedback.
- Continue with classroom visits and teacher-teacher mentoring in feedback and formative assessment. It is important for us to utilise and build on staff expertise.
- Develop differentiated learning by establishing three or four professional learning communities (PLCs), which offer teachers a choice of focus (eg. peer assessment, teacher feedback, formative assessment) depending on their interest and current expertise. Groups to set their own targets for improvement. Within these groups establish triads of peer coaching to support the collective efficacy.

Strategic Direction 2

Developing Quality Educators and Leaders

Purpose

To embed a culture of individual and collective efficacy where teachers are provided with the support and professional learning to maximise their effectiveness as educators and leaders.

Overall summary of progress

2016 was an exciting year for our quality educators and leaders with teachers demonstrating a genuine commitment toward developing a true performance and development culture across the school. This was evident in program evaluations and staff annual review of Performance and Development Plan goals whereby formative assessment strategies and the language of formative assessment were being used more consistently. A total of 16 classes also participated in Instructional Rounds and during this process it was observed that Learning Intentions and Success Criteria and opportunities for student peer assessment was evident in most lessons.

Professional learning across the school included Librarians accessing professional learning in the Oliver System for their core business, Learning and Support Staff, including English as a Second Language teachers remaining up to date with their professional learning needs, the Executive participating in the Curiosity and Powerful Learning framework and Geography syllabus implementation training delivered to all teachers.

Classroom teachers participated in a pedagogical coaching and team teaching program in an area of inquiry focused teaching throughout 2016. Programs included:

- Self Organised Learning Environments (SOLE) trialled in 4 classrooms
- Genius Hour – passion based learning trialled in 3 classrooms
- Inquiry focus teaching in Mathematics trialled in 8 classrooms
- Differentiated game based learning trialled in 4 classrooms
- Personal interest projects using ICT trialled in 2 classrooms.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
Teachers are actively engaged in planning their own professional development to improve their performance aligned with the school's needs.	Teachers have actively participated in the PDP process and sought professional learning opportunities aligned to their needs in the area of formative assessment and feedback. There is evidence of formative assessment being used in classrooms.	\$18 000
Increased number of teachers performing the role of mentor at Birrong PS and across the RALBY CoS.	Staff members have participated in mentoring opportunities and strengthened their capacity as leaders of professional learning through RALBee CoS structures including the Executive Arm, Aspiring Leaders and Geography Syllabus Implementation Team.	\$5 000

Next Steps

- Formative Assessment, Peer Assessment and LISC to remain a focus throughout 2017.
- Mentoring / Coaching to be refined with a focus on Literacy and Numeracy.
- Data analysis to drive teaching and learning needs to be a focus for all teachers in 2017.
- On going professional learning to meet identified needs of teachers to be available as required.

Strategic Direction 3

Fostering Supportive and Collaborative Partnerships

Purpose

To maximise success for students and enhance staff performance through building strong, supportive and collaborative relationships with:

- students
- parents
- community
- other educational institutions
- DEC personnel
- outside experts
- and each member of the Birrong Team.

Overall summary of progress

2016 saw further consolidation of networks implemented in 2015 for students to develop relationships across years and stages. The continuation of Birrong Radio connected students and staff to the events happening within the school. Playground Pals and the inclusion of all students in Lifeskills and Peer Support programs supported student needs. These programs provided a range of effective strategies to develop the core values of excellence, integrity, cooperation, respect and resilience enabling students to further develop positive relationships. A Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) focus was presented at PBL assemblies and by SRC members at morning assemblies. These focus values were reinforced by teachers in classrooms. Teachers actively engaged with colleagues across the RALBee Community of Schools network. All teachers attended the Community of Schools network workshop to support the effective implementation of the Geography syllabus. Aspiring Leaders workshops were available for future leaders and teachers completing accreditation. The RALBee Instructional Rounds team observed lessons in classrooms and provided feedback summaries which included suggestions for future directions. Community days to celebrate the diversity of the school community included Harmony Day, Pedlars' Parade, Grandparents Day and the P&C yard games which were all well attended. Students in Years 1 and 3 were offered free vision screening by a local optometrist. A speech pathologist was employed to develop targeted students' language skills and model language lessons in classrooms to develop teachers' skills. An increased number of parents/carers accessed the Birrong–Connects framework through the Birrong PS website, and Skoolbag and Facebook apps, to communicate more effectively with the school.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
100% of students and staff actively involved in networks beyond the classroom.	All staff members actively participated in the RALBee CoS network, primarily in the Geography syllabus implementation. Transition programs were continued and further strengthened.	\$10 000
75% of parents indicate increased understanding of how student learning develops.	Parents and carers were given many opportunities to participate in school-based activities. Information sessions were organised for parents but participation was poor.	\$2 000

Next Steps

- Determine staff involvement in social media for educational purposes to increase the number utilising social media as authentic professional learning networks.
- Develop workshops for parents and community members in areas of interest or need for learning as identified to further strengthen the home–school partnership.

Key Initiatives	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
Aboriginal background loading	ATSI student/s have a Personalised Learning Pathway (PLP) developed in collaboration with parents/carers, student and teacher/s and are making progress across the literacy and numeracy continuums.	\$800
English language proficiency	An action plan was developed for identified students requiring EAL/D. 0.4 additional employment of staffing to support students requiring EAL/D support.	\$40 000
Low level adjustment for disability	0.2 additional employment of Learning and Support Teacher (LaST) to monitor/support students at risk and relieve the Learning Support Team (LST) coordinator. Students requiring support for transition identified and supported by LST members. Teachers released to develop Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and consult parents in the process.	\$20 000
Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)	Timetable weekly support with AP through school organisation. Collaborative sharing sessions embedded in the school timetable to allow teachers to observe one another. A mentoring program established with clearly defined roles for executive to work with teachers on their performance and development goals.	\$80 000
Socio-economic background	All students receive literacy and numeracy programs that are responsive to their needs. Employment of 3 School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs) to support identified students in the classrooms. Employment of additional School Administration Officer (SAO) for school based assessment data entry and wellbeing program maintenance. A speech pathologist was employed for one day per week in Semester 2 to work with teachers in K-2 classrooms. Lifeskills, a wellbeing program, utilised to support students K-6 in the development of their social and emotional resilience and self-regulation skills.	\$147 000
Support for beginning teachers	Timetable weekly support with supervisor through school organisation. Additional release time utilised to support process of accreditation.	\$1 964
Targeted student support for refugees and new arrivals	Students supported in small group New Arrivals Program for English. Students also supported with access to SLSOs and financial resources to participate in extracurricular programs.	\$5 000

Student information

Student enrolment profile

	Enrolments			
Students	2013	2014	2015	2016
Boys	258	245	261	276
Girls	287	314	300	283

Enrolment numbers have steadily increased over the last four years. There is not a significant gap between the number of girls and boys as seen in previous years.

Student attendance profile

School				
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016
K	95.1	93.6	94.6	95.2
1	91.9	96.2	93.3	95.2
2	96	95.5	91.6	94
3	94.4	97.1	93.6	95.2
4	95.2	96.7	94.8	94.4
5	97.3	96.1	93.2	94.9
6	94.5	96.5	94.8	95.3
All Years	95	96	93.7	94.9
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
All Years	94.7	94.8	94	94

Management of non-attendance

Rolls are consistently monitored with class teachers seeking absence notes and contacting parents if students have an unexplained absence. Student attendance is discussed at fortnightly team meetings. Regular monitoring of students who are continually absent and/or repeatedly late also occurs with reports to the Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) made at least once a term. The school processed over 115 applications for extended leave in 2016.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	4
Classroom Teacher(s)	19.91
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0.74
Learning and Support Teacher(s)	1.4
Teacher Librarian	1
Teacher of ESL	1.4
School Counsellor	0
School Administration & Support Staff	4.06
Other Positions	0

*Full Time Equivalent

In 2016 the executive team at Birrong includes a Principal, one Deputy Principal and 4 Assistant Principals. There are 22 classroom teachers, one teacher librarian and 6 specialist support staff. A number of teachers have taken leave resulting in temporary teaching positions for the year. The teaching staff is supported by a School Administration Manager (SAM), two School Administration Officers (SAOs), three School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs) and a General Assistant (GA).

At the time of writing this report, Birrong Public School did not have any identified indigenous staff members.

There were some staff changes in 2016. Mrs Patricia Canepa joined the teaching staff as a classroom teacher. Miss Caitlin Collins commenced her position as the school's substantive Learning and Support Teacher. Mr David Unicomb participated in a teacher exchange program and relocated his family to Canada. Mr Chris Martin joined the school as the exchange teacher from Canada.

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	56

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Professional Learning

To support the school's strategic directions, all teachers, learning support officers and administration staff participated in an extensive range of professional learning projects, programs and workshops in 2016. The school committed a large amount of money towards the professional learning through RAM. School based professional learning occurs for an hour each week and focuses on improved pedagogy, compliance training and whole school monitoring of milestones related to the implementation of the School Plan.

In the school development day for Term 1 Birrong Public School staff examined the Wellbeing Framework, the school's new attendance policy and the Child Protection update for 2016. Teaching and non-teaching staff also participated in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention training during Term 1. The course aimed to improve staff members' skills to respond to disruptive student behaviours and de-escalate the situation where possible.

Executive staff commenced professional learning in the area of Curiosity and Powerful Learning to focus on the 10 theories of action required for whole school improvement. As a result learning intentions, success criteria (LISC) and formative assessment strategies were identified as priority areas for our school. Through the **train the trainer** model all staff improved their use of LISC and formative assessment in the classroom to directly improve student learning outcomes.

In Term 2 the school development day saw staff members participate in professional learning activities for visual art. The sessions were led by two teachers from Birrong PS who provided colleagues with the information and expertise to stimulate creativity amongst their students by introducing them to a variety of drawing, painting and printing techniques. Staff also revisited the school's strategic directions and examined the School Excellence Framework which supports all NSW public schools in their pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of the key elements of high-quality practice across the three domains of learning, teaching and leading.

In Term 3 Birrong PS hosted the RALBee Community of Schools (Regents Park, Auburn, Lidcombe and

Birrong Public Schools) for a combined morning of professional learning in the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) Key Learning Area (KLA). Renee West, PDHPE Advisor 7–12, presented the Physical Literacy Continuum to over 200 teaching staff from the four schools. Staff from Lidcombe PS ran fundamental movement skills workshops and Birrong PS staff finished the day with Aboriginal games and a Peer Support Program information session.

During Semester 2 Birrong Public School staff joined RALBee CoS colleagues to participate in professional learning for the implementation of the new Geography curriculum in 2017. This professional learning was led by the RALBee school Geography teams as a result of professional learning delivered by Anne Southwell, HSIE (History and Geography) Adviser.

In Term 4 Birrong Public School staff joined other RALBee schools for further professional learning in Geography which culminated in the development of learning programs based on the inquiry model.

The two scheduled days at the end of the year were swapped with 4 x 3 hour twilight professional learning sessions which were held in Terms 2, 3 and 4. The variation allowed the staff a greater opportunity to participate in professional learning that was relevant to the term's focus and it maximised teacher engagement. Professional learning topic areas included: Count Me In Too Framework, working mathematically, problem solving in Mathematics, differentiation in Mathematics to meet the needs of all students, Young learners: Brain development and social-emotional learning, 123 Magic and emotional regulation for the classroom, Filmpond, Tell them From Me – student, teacher and parent survey results and future directions, Instructional Rounds findings and recommendations and Emergency Care.

Teacher Accreditation

During 2016 teachers seeking Accreditation participated in two school based professional learning workshops including Selecting evidence (1) and Writing annotations (2).

Workshop 1 introduced teachers to the Accreditation and Proficient Procedures with a focus on selecting evidence. Teachers developed a better understanding of selecting suitable pieces of evidence for the purpose of achieving Accreditation at Proficient.

Workshop 2 focused on supporting teachers to write quality annotations linked to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers for their selected pieces of evidence. Teachers were able to align a piece of evidence to the relevant standard descriptors to write a quality sample annotation.

One teacher was successful in achieving Accreditation by the end of 2016 while two other teachers advised that they were now better placed to complete their Accreditation Reports. 13 teachers are currently maintaining their accreditation.

Financial information (for schools using both OASIS and SAP/SALM)

Financial information

The three financial summary tables cover 13 months (from 1 December 2015 to 31 December 2016).

The financial summary consists of school income broken down by funding source and is derived from the school Annual Financial Statement.

Income	\$
Balance brought forward	483 692.73
Global funds	316 500.86
Tied funds	508 572.16
School & community sources	194 668.45
Interest	7 383.76
Trust receipts	142 282.99
Canteen	0.00
Total income	1 653 100.95
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	15 136.48
Excursions	28 504.60
Extracurricular dissections	46 498.93
Library	8 088.22
Training & development	0.00
Tied funds	387 421.90
Short term relief	55 136.06
Administration & office	55 827.27
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	49 331.64
Maintenance	108 723.25
Trust accounts	137 670.03
Capital programs	199 392.01
Total expenditure	1 091 730.39
Balance carried forward	561 370.56

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 16 October 2016 to 31 December 2016.

	2016 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	0.00
Revenue	598 437.33
(2a) Appropriation	562 695.56
(2b) Sale of Goods and Services	1 332.27
(2c) Grants and Contributions	34 020.35
(2e) Gain and Loss	0.00
(2f) Other Revenue	0.00
(2d) Investment Income	389.15
Expenses	-248 088.16
Recurrent Expenses	-248 088.16
(3a) Employee Related	-154 882.47
(3b) Operating Expenses	-93 205.69
Capital Expenses	0.00
(3c) Employee Related	0.00
(3d) Operating Expenses	0.00
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	350 349.17
Balance Carried Forward	350 349.17

There is no opening balance recorded in the SAP finance table. The opening balance for the school for this reporting period is recorded as the Balance Brought Forward in the OASIS table.

The OASIS Balance carried forward amount (ie, funds on date of migration) is included in the (2a) Appropriation amount in the SAP table.

Any differences between the OASIS Balance carried forward and (2a) Appropriation amount is the result of other accounts and transactions being included in the (2a) Appropriation amount.

The school intends to spend its available funds on a number of projects in 2017 including:

- Installation of artificial turf near the Hall COLA in conjunction with the P&C project to develop an interactive playground
- Replacement of classroom air conditioners
- Contribution to school's maintenance projects including the resurfacing of the Hall's timber floor.

Financial summary equity funding

The equity funding data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' section of the financial summary above.

	2016 Actual (\$)
Base Total	3 576 200.14
Base Per Capita	30 050.23
Base Location	0.00
Other Base	3 546 149.91
Equity Total	580 791.33
Equity Aboriginal	881.63
Equity Socio economic	216 112.36
Equity Language	164 696.11
Equity Disability	199 101.23
Targeted Total	25 152.59
Other Total	79 033.35
Grand Total	4 261 177.41

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

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 *My School* and insert the school name in the *Find a school* and select *GO* to access the school data.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

The **Tell Them From Me** surveys were completed by the majority of our students in Years 4 to 6, by all teachers working at Birrong Public School, and an increased number of parents as compared to 2015.

Some of the feedback included:

Students with a positive sense of belonging:

- Students feel accepted and valued by their peers and by others at their school with 79% of students indicating they had a high sense of belonging.

Students who value schooling outcomes:

- 95% of our students believe that education will benefit them personally and economically, and will have a strong bearing on their future.

Parents feel welcome at Birrong Public School:

- 8.1 out of 10 parents feel welcome when they visit the school
- 7.8 out of 10 parents feel they can easily speak to their child's teacher
- 7.7 out of 10 parents feel they can easily speak to the school Principal
- 8.7 out of 10 parents feel that the administrative staff are helpful when they have a question or problem.

Teacher surveys report on some of the drivers of student learning:

- 7.9 out of 10 teachers report that school leaders have helped them to improve their teaching
- 8.8 out of 10 teachers report that they discuss learning problems of particular students with other teachers
- 9.1 out of 10 teachers report that they set high expectations for student learning.

The feedback was analysed and used to help inform our school's future decision-making and planning for 2017. Some future directions to be implemented in 2017 include:

- The setting of designated times for the teaching of English and Mathematics to further support student achievement in these Key Learning Areas (KLAs)
- The continuation of the student Peer Support Program to further support students to develop effective social skills
- Improve parent involvement with student progress including the provision of additional language interpreting services during parent interviews.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Aboriginal education continued to be supported throughout 2016 with a total of five teachers including a Learner Leader participating in Aboriginal Education Committee meetings.

The focus of the committee was to communicate to staff our responsibility as educators to engage all students in the history, culture and perspective of Aboriginal Australia regardless of students' own cultural background.

To achieve this, the Aboriginal Education Committee Learner Leader and the Learning and Support Teacher collaboratively prepared a Personalised Learning Pathway (PLP) for a student identified as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

The committee continued to promote Aboriginal Education in the form of having all teachers observe Yalunga Aboriginal Game demonstrations with Stages participating in these games during NAIDOC week.

The committee renewed its commitment to increase links during 2017 between our Aboriginal Education Committee and our local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

Birrong Public School continues to promote multicultural education. Tolerance and respect for all cultures is embedded in all aspects of the curriculum and school environment. In 2016 specialist EAL/D (English as an Additional Language or Dialect) teachers provided support to cater for the specific needs of students from a language background other than English (LBOTE) with the aim to develop their English language competence across the curriculum. The EAL/D support was delivered in a variety of ways, including team teaching and group teaching, to meet the diverse needs of EAL/D students at different stages of learning English. The New Arrivals Program (NAP) was conducted five hours a week in a withdrawal setting for intensive English language learning. The focus of NAP was the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills linked to the curriculum content.

Multicultural education permeates all aspects of the curriculum. The school highlights special days such as Harmony Day, recognises and celebrates religious events and promotes an inclusive school community. There is a trained anti-racism officer who deals with any racist issues that may occur and are referred. Our school engages full participation from parents and community members from diverse backgrounds.

Other school programs

Environmental Education and Sustainability

Throughout 2016 Birrong Public School continued to maintain and promote a culture of sustainability in order to achieve best practice in the management of resources within the school community. This year a team of six teachers and approximately eighty students from Year 2 to Year 6 contributed to the following major achievements:

- A compost structure to help recycle sticks, garden clippings and leaves was built with Mr Kone's assistance.
- The Veggie Patch was once again in full operation. Our dedicated students had a very successful crop of lettuce, corn, eggplant, beetroot, peas, tomatoes and capsicum.
- Worm farm collection reduces the costs associated with rubbish removal whilst also providing us with fertiliser for our gardens.
- Mrs Lopez has continued to organise the paper and cardboard recycling and plastic bottle and drink carton recycling with the assistance of Year 6 environment club members.
- Ground maintenance including planting and mulching with the assistance of Mr Kone.
- Participation in the Clean Up Australia for Schools program.

Other initiatives taken advantage of throughout the year include:

- Ms Boyd, Miss Falzon and environment club members participated in the Western Sydney Parklands Schools Planting Program at Lizard Log. In doing so our school made a valuable contribution to expanding the natural bushland areas and wildlife habitats of the Cumberland Plain and River Flat Eucalyptus vegetation.
- All classes participated in a Know Waste Program which delivered practical and interactive lessons that improved students' awareness, knowledge and skills on waste and recycling issues that impact our environment. This program was presented by Cleanaway on behalf of Bankstown Council.
- Mrs Kelly, Miss Brown and Miss Falzon organised an excursion to the Zoo as a thank you to Environment Club members.

Choir

This year 30 students from Years 3–6 formed the school choir. The school choir performed regularly at school PBL assemblies and at the School Presentation Ceremony at Bankstown Sports Club, where they sang 'Morning Town Ride' by The Seekers.

Sixteen students were carefully selected to perform in the combined school choir for Our Spectacular. They participated in 3 full day rehearsals at Granville South Performing Arts High School in Terms 2 and 3 and successfully learned and performed 12 songs with the theme 'Showtime'. The Spectacular Choir also

performed a special Canadian folk song, 'Land of the Silver Birch', for The Canadian exchange teacher Mr Martin and his family on Canada Day. The choir represented the school proudly and displayed courtesy and respect at all times when in public and visiting other schools. The opportunity for students to perform at the Opera House is a once in a life-time chance and we thank the parents and guardians of these students for supporting us in affording them the opportunity.

Dance Troupe

In 2016 35 students from Years 3–6 participated in Our Spectacular at the Sydney Opera House. The theme this year was Showtime and the students danced to the song *I Like To Move It, Move It!* from the film Madagascar.

The performance was animal themed, with the zebra and giraffe costumes being a particular highlight for audience members.

All the students worked hard, attending two rehearsals a week during their lunchtime. The final dress rehearsal was a day long event at the Opera House. Students participated in the finale with all the other performing schools and the mass choir singing the song, *Walking on Sunshine*.

Debating

This year Birrong Public School participated in a friendly debating competition held at participating schools within our area. The debaters progressed to the final round of the competition following seven rounds of debates. They managed to secure a win against Bankstown North Public School in the final round.

Students met with Miss Omar twice a week to learn new techniques and skills. They successfully enhanced their skills in research, defining a topic, developing a sustained argument, persuasively presenting a point of view and rebuttal. They cooperated well as a team and conducted themselves in a professional manner at all times.

Band

The school band, tutored by Mr Rae Forrester, has members from Years 3–6. All band members work with Mr Forrester each week and practise their instruments at home. Birrong School Band joined the Mount Pritchard School Band to compete at a regional Eisteddfod where they earned the highest award possible. Birrong School Band also participated in a local community Christmas concert.

Premier's Reading Challenge (PRC)

This is our 13th year of promotion and participation in the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge where students are encouraged to read widely throughout the year. During 2016, all our K–6 students attempted the challenge to read up to 30 books. These 325 students were acknowledged at our end of year assembly.

31 Year 3 students were successful in completing the Challenge by reading 20 books independently.

One Year 6 student received a platinum award for successfully completing the PRC for seven years in a row, while 43 students received a gold award for completing the challenge for a total of four years.

Sport

Birrong Public School had a very busy year in sporting events during 2016. The school was involved in all three district carnivals; swimming, cross country and athletics. We achieved the following results: 6th at swimming, 9th at cross country and 10th at athletics. Students also participated at regional level in all three carnivals and in district teams for a number of sports including basketball and soccer.

Winter PSSA was very successful for the junior girls' soccer team and junior boys' newcombe ball team with both winning their grand finals. Success was also achieved during Summer PSSA with both the junior girls' basketball team and junior boys' cricket team competing in their respective grand finals.

Throughout the year students K–6 took part in a Lifeskills program. They participated in 8 sessions which taught them breathing techniques and yoga exercises to improve their personal mindfulness and wellbeing.

Year 6 students supported weekly Kindergarten sport under teacher guidance in a range of sporting skills in Term 1. The Department of Education School Swimming and Water Safety program was held in Term 4 with 177 students participating from Years 2–6.