

Heaton Public School Annual Report



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Introduction

The Annual Report for **2016** is provided to the community of **Heaton 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.

Brett Meek

Principal

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Message from the Principal

Student Learning, Pedagogical Practice and An Engaged Community drive our success. Students are keen to learn and take responsibility for their improvement. Dedicated teachers engage in professional dialogue, learning and cooperative planning. Our school community is increasingly engaged and regularly come together to celebrate success.

During 2016, our whole–school community identified core values, Respect, Responsibility and Inclusion and developed a values statement, Learning together with Respect, Responsibility and Inclusion, which clearly expresses the beliefs, desires and “feel” of our school.

An influx of refugee children during Semester 2 was unexpected and presented many challenges. Student numbers increased and during Term 3 we were allocated a ninth teacher. The Department of Education installed a demountable classroom to meet the need. A decision was made to maintain classes and to utilise the extra teacher, along with the EAL/D teachers, in an Intensive English Class that operated in the morning literacy session with students returning to regular classes for the remainder of the day.

While our focus continued to be our three strategic directions the number of non–English speaking students, spread throughout every class, required us to rethink our plans. By the end of the year, the refugee cohort was approximately 16% of the student population. We worked closely with outside agencies and other schools to ensure that the transition to school and their new country was as smooth as possible. We worked to gain appropriate placements for five children with disabilities who need additional support. We predict that Heaton will continue to enrol refugee students into the future.

During 2016 we implemented LMBR. We fully implemented the student management software for roll marking and wellbeing which will continue through 2017 when we will make a decision about our continued use of third–party software, Sentral.

At the beginning of 2016 Ms Stoltenberg returned to Heaton after spending 2015 teaching in Western NSW. She spent the year with 3/4S before announcing that her time at Heaton had come to an end. She returned to Boggabri PS to take up a relieving executive position for 2017. We thank Ms Stolty for her tireless work at Heaton over the past 22 years and wish her well in her career in the bush. Mr Bryant announced he would be taking leave for 2017 before retiring in early 2018. I would like to congratulate Mr Bryant for an outstanding career that spanned 38 years and included time as a classroom teacher, Assistant Principal and Relieving Principal.

We welcomed Mr Wilkinson as our LaST, Mr Al Muraib as Bi–lingual SLSO and Mrs Evans as relieving AP for 2017. Mrs Harborne was successful in gaining permanency after many years of temporary engagements. Congratulations and welcome to Heaton Public School.

While 2016 was a year in which we dealt with a number of unexpected events, feedback from our school community has been largely positive. Our goal for 2017 is to improve our internal review procedures and to embed the School Excellence Framework into planning, self–assessment and identification of future directions. We will work to have this improvement in place before Term 3 when we will begin to develop our 2018–2020 school plan. Our next planning cycle is an exciting opportunity to plan a roadmap that will ensure we successfully meet our goals.

Brett Meek

Principal

School background

School vision statement

At Heaton we acknowledge that our school is built upon the traditional lands of the Awabakal people. We honour the connection to this land of elders past and present and value the responsibility we have in developing the elders of the future.

We live by our motto, *Only the Best*. We aim to cultivate a whole-school community in which all learners develop creative, investigative and independent skills within an inclusive environment resulting in productive 21st Century citizens who value the concept of life-long learning.

School context

Heaton Public School is set in extensive grounds with grassed playing fields and attractive bush gardens in the Newcastle suburb of Jesmond. The school utilises the latest technology within modern, fully air-conditioned classrooms.

Heaton Public School has a proud tradition of delivering high-quality teaching and learning programs for children from Kindergarten to Year 6. The school was recognised as a Centre for Excellence in 2011 and has continued to develop through strategic teacher professional learning and student participation and achievement.

Heaton Public School is an active member of the Callaghan Educational Pathways group of schools and has a close working relationship with the senior campus and both junior campuses of Callaghan College. This group of closely aligned public schools utilises its combined size and resources to afford students valuable learning experiences that are not always possible or sustainable for individual schools.

Heaton Public School has a very close relationship with the University of Newcastle with a number of overseas students and their families taking up residence within our area. This has seen our school grow as a multicultural community and has allowed our students the privilege of exposure to the rich cultures and traditions of our overseas families.

Heaton Public School has a current student enrolment of 220 students (December 2016) with approximately 9% identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. We also have approximately 50% of students who are from a language background other than English. These students come from a range of family circumstances including refugee, humanitarian, new citizens and overseas university students.

Heaton Public School has a welcoming and highly supportive community which supports and takes great pride in the school's multi-culturalism, achievements and endeavours.

Self-assessment and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

For all schools (except those participating in external validation processes):

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, our efforts were primarily focussed on Wellbeing, Assessment and Reporting and Student Performance Measures. Our large cohort of refugee students settled well and achieved success in their learning throughout Semester 2. Our enrolment processes, transition arrangements and family support ensured that these students settled into their new school and country as smoothly as possible. We have a culture in which assessment is increasingly analysed and used to identify student need and guide teacher planning. Our whole-school writing tasks, PLAN data and Naplan analysis identify areas of student need and teaching programs reflect planning which is directly related to assessment.

In the domain of Teaching, our primary focus was on Effective Classroom Practice and Collaborative Practice. Instructional Leadership led to teachers becoming increasingly confident to try new classroom practices. The whole-

school writing task embedded collaborative practice as teachers worked together to develop tasks and to ensure consistent teacher judgement. Teachers entered PLAN data together which generated quality collegial discussions around student achievement.

In the Leading domain our priority has been continue the development of policies and procedures which meet mandatory requirements and the needs of our school community. Our school leadership team played a major role in supporting other schools to support newly arrived refugee students through the development of a Refugee School Leadership Network which met twice per term at Heaton.

We have begun to restructure, streamline and formalise our internal review procedures and they will be in place in time for the 2017 Annual Report.

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

Excellence in Student Learning

Purpose

To develop creative, investigative and independent students who take responsibility for their own learning.

Overall summary of progress

The release of Assistant Principal Phillip Magennis to perform the role of Instructional Leader was a success as teachers learnt with and from each other as part of their everyday work. Mr Magennis also worked closely with individual students who needed additional assistance to access content.

Focussing on Creative and Performing Arts during RFF time saw students' confidence increase across all areas. The end-of-year performance was of high quality and was extremely well supported by the whole-school community.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased evidence in teacher programs of differentiated instruction using student achievement of the literacy and numeracy continuum levels.	Student assessment against continuum levels are carried out regularly and uploaded to PLAN on a 5-weekly basis. Supervision of teaching programs shows that student achievement data against continuum levels is being used to differentiate learning within the classroom.	Teacher release to collaboratively assess and record PLAN data (RAM \$11200)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Aboriginal students have a PLP developed in collaboration with the LST, CT and parents. PLPs are regularly monitored and adjustments made as necessary.	MGoals is being used to develop learning goals with students and their families and PLPs are being developed using this strategy. Community engagement with the Cultural Pathways project is increasing as Stage 2 completed during 2016.	Teacher release for MGoals development and completion of Stage 2 of Cultural Pathways projects (RAM \$8000)

Next Steps

Heaton Public School is looking at the success of MGoals with our Aboriginal students and their families with a view to introducing all students to the goal setting section.

Continued collection of PLAN data with ongoing development of linked assessment tasks across the school.

Review of Mathematics teaching during 2017 with a focus on consistency across the school.



Strategic Direction 2

Excellence in Pedagogical Practice

Purpose

To develop a school culture where staff members are responsible for their learning, strive for innovation and have the capacity to provide a flexible curriculum to meet the diverse needs of our students.

Overall summary of progress

Mr Magennis's role as Instructional Leader across the school complemented the Professional Development Framework implementation. Teachers identified goals and work with Mr Magennis to improve teaching, assessment, planning and programming.

The Heaton Public School Professional Development Framework procedures are fully embedded and drive teacher learning.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
All teachers develop and regularly monitor their personal professional plan.	All teachers are working within the Heaton Public School Performance and Development timeline. All teachers have a Professional Development Plan and use the professional goals within their plan to identified professional learning opportunities.	Teacher release for professional learning (RAM \$2000)
The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the Quality Teaching Model are clearly used as the basis for classroom observations and feedback during Performance and Review procedures.	Australian Teaching Standards and Quality Teaching elements are embed in classroom observation rounds.	Assistant Principal/Instructional Leader
Teacher programs clearly outline ways in which the curriculum and pedagogical practice is being differentiated to meet the needs of all students.	Student achievement of curriculum levels is clearly evident within teaching programs and used to drive teaching. Whole-school writing task used to identify targeted areas in writing which are clearly evident in teaching programs.	Assistant Principal/Instructional Leader

Next Steps

Ongoing reflection of teaching programs will continue throughout 2017 as part of improved internal review procedures.

Review of Mathematics teaching across the school will be carried out.

In-depth analysis of data collection to determine improved school collection and use to drive improvements in student outcomes.



Strategic Direction 3

An Engaged Community

Purpose

Working together as a learning community we will give our students the knowledge, skills and experiences to achieve their personal goals and be successful 21st Century citizens.

Overall summary of progress

While communication methods have improved there is still work to do. The number of non-English speaking families in our school has prompted reflection on all of our methods for disseminating information. Poor return of important notes has been identified as an area for further improvement.

Parents/carers are increasingly involved in school celebrations with a marked, and pleasing, increase in the number of parents attending the weekly assembly on Friday afternoon. The end-of-year performance saw the hall full to capacity.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
Increased engagement of the wider school community through the use of technology and traditional forms of communication through the collection of usage data and response to content of notes, letters and other communication.	Digital communications such as Facebook, Website, Skoolbag and traditional paper-based communication methods being utilised.	Teacher release (Comp Coordinator), Office staff and licence fees. (RAM \$5000)
Student attendance data which meets or exceeds State Average.	Overall student attendance at 94.7% which exceeds State Average.	HSLO Support
Improved student attendance data for our Aboriginal community.	Attendance of our Aboriginal students has increased to 85.1%	HSLO support

Next Steps

Investigation into the effectiveness of our communication with parents will be carried out in 2017 with a particular emphasis on how we ensure that important information is accessible by our non-English speaking families.



Key Initiatives	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
Aboriginal background loading	Improved community engagement through Cultural Pathways project. Improvement in parental engagement in student PLP development through introduction of MGoals.	(RAM \$8000)
English language proficiency	Improved English acquisition among non-English speaking students.	EAL/D Teacher 0.2 (RAM \$25890) New Arrivals Program teacher allocation Bi-lingual SLSO
Low level adjustment for disability	Funds used to release Assistant Principal to fulfil and Instructional Leadership role across the school which improved teacher Professional Learning, collaborative practice and planning.	Assistant Principal 0.6 (RAM \$16228 and other school funds)
Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)	Funds used to release Assistant Principal to fulfil and Instructional Leadership role across the school which improved teacher Professional Learning, collaborative practice and planning.	0.07 Allocation
Socio-economic background	Funds used to release Assistant Principal to fulfil and Instructional Leadership role across the school which improved teacher Professional Learning, collaborative practice and planning.	Assistant Principal 0.6 (RAM \$14886 and other school funds)
Support for beginning teachers	Extra Release from Face-to-Face teaching time, teacher mentor days and additional Professional Learning provided to two beginning teachers.	(\$17500)
Targeted student support for refugees and new arrivals	Targeted assistance to newly arrived refugee students to enable successful transition to school.	(RAM \$2133 = additional school funds)



Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
Boys	103	98	87	112
Girls	104	90	91	93

Student attendance profile

School				
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016
K	94.1	96.3	90.8	93.5
1	93.6	94.4	95.2	94.4
2	94.8	95	91.1	96.1
3	94.5	95.6	92	94.3
4	94.9	96.2	95.2	94
5	91.8	94.8	93.6	95.6
6	93.5	93.2	92.6	95.7
All Years	93.8	95.1	92.9	94.7
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

Student attendance is regularly monitored in accordance with Department Policy. HSLO support is sought as required to ensure appropriate student attendance is maintained. Heaton Public School developed and implemented a new Attendance Policy during 2016.

Class sizes

Class	Total
KL	19
K-1P	19
1F	21
2D	21
3M	28
4S	25
4-5H	25
5-6B	25

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Assistant Principal(s)	2
Classroom Teacher(s)	6.64
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0.32
Learning and Support Teacher(s)	0.7
Teacher Librarian	0.4
Teacher of ESL	0
School Administration & Support Staff	2.02
Other Positions	0

*Full Time Equivalent

Heaton Public School began 2016 with students placed into eight classes, however, increased student numbers saw the school's teacher allocation increase to nine during Term 3.

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	

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

All teachers participated in professional learning which was identified through the Professional Development Framework process. Teachers monitored their own learning through their individual Professional Learning Plans. Professional learning goals were identified to meet the needs of the school, the needs of individual students and the career aspirations of individual teachers.

All staff participated in mandatory training and planned professional learning each week throughout the year. A number of teachers visited other schools to observe best-practice in literacy and numeracy. EAL/D teachers, beginning teachers and casual/temporary teachers participated in network meetings each term. All staff participated in gazetted Staff Development Days at the beginning of Term 1, 2 and 3. The two end-of-year Staff Development Days were brought forward to Thursday of Week 5 each term, during which teachers worked with the wider school community to develop school values, create a values statement and new school pledge and redesign school communications.

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.

Large carryover of funds due to transition to LMBR. Carryover funds will be used in 2017 to purchase classroom resources, replacement technology and to update the school library.

\$10000 donation from Kilham Family was used to purchase additional reading resources.

Income	\$
Balance brought forward	194 667.11
Global funds	109 120.86
Tied funds	93 148.03
School & community sources	33 031.72
Interest	2 488.04
Trust receipts	8 365.67
Canteen	0.00
Total income	440 821.43
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	7 529.91
Excursions	306.82
Extracurricular dissections	12 149.44
Library	3 327.41
Training & development	729.11
Tied funds	76 437.12
Short term relief	12 765.32
Administration & office	25 648.65
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	23 545.34
Maintenance	2 516.25
Trust accounts	8 365.67
Capital programs	0.00
Total expenditure	173 321.04
Balance carried forward	267 500.39

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 December 2015 to 31 December 2016.

	2016 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	0.00
Revenue	468 151.95
(2a) Appropriation	403 678.53
(2b) Sale of Goods and Services	236.35
(2c) Grants and Contributions	62 902.44
(2e) Gain and Loss	0.00
(2f) Other Revenue	0.00
(2d) Investment Income	1 334.63
Expenses	-274 585.77
Recurrent Expenses	-274 585.77
(3a) Employee Related	-106 404.32
(3b) Operating Expenses	-168 181.45
Capital Expenses	0.00
(3c) Employee Related	0.00
(3d) Operating Expenses	0.00
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	193 566.18
Balance Carried Forward	193 566.18

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.

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	1 423 942.06
Base Per Capita	9 583.75
Base Location	0.00
Other Base	1 414 358.31
Equity Total	134 655.51
Equity Aboriginal	6 236.06
Equity Socio economic	14 886.37
Equity Language	25 890.47
Equity Disability	87 642.62
Targeted Total	29 592.61
Other Total	41 961.04
Grand Total	1 630 151.22

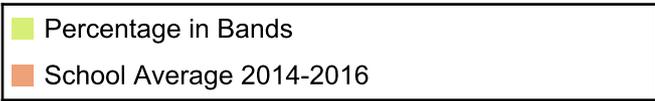
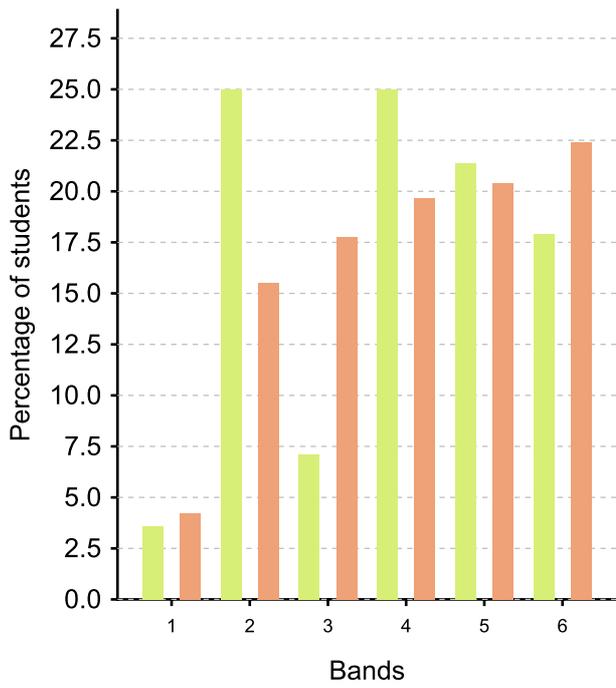
A full copy of the school's financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance

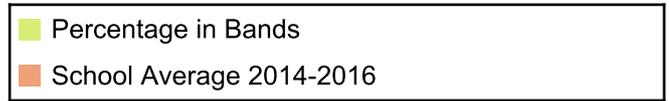
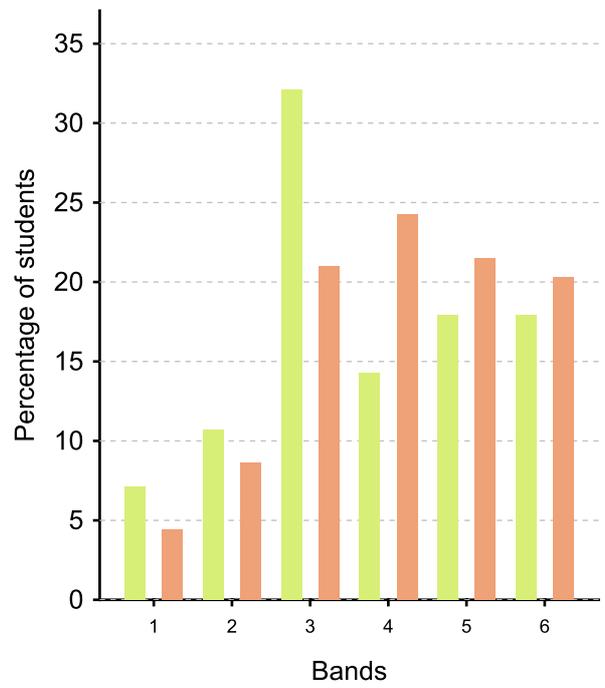
NAPLAN

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.

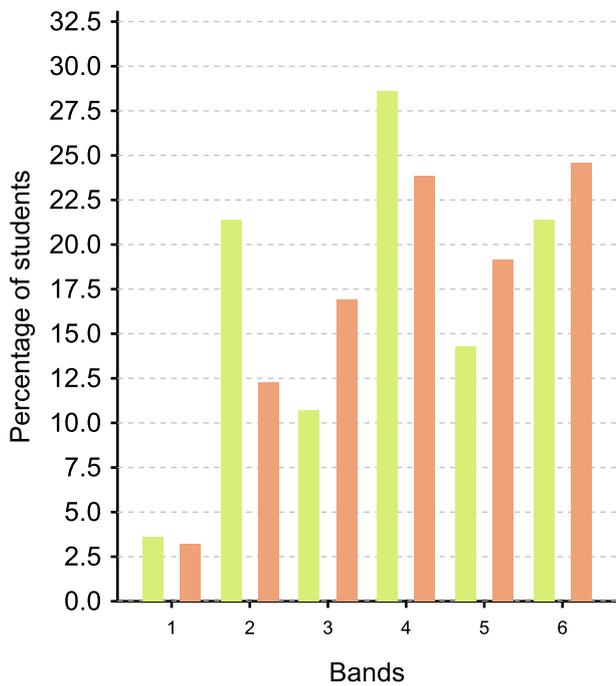
Percentage in bands:
Year 3 Reading



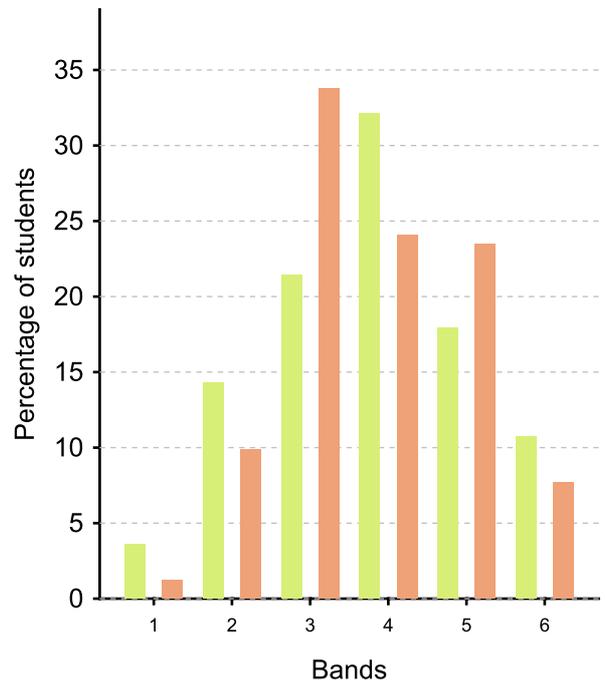
Percentage in bands:
Year 3 Grammar & Punctuation



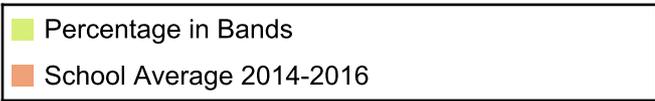
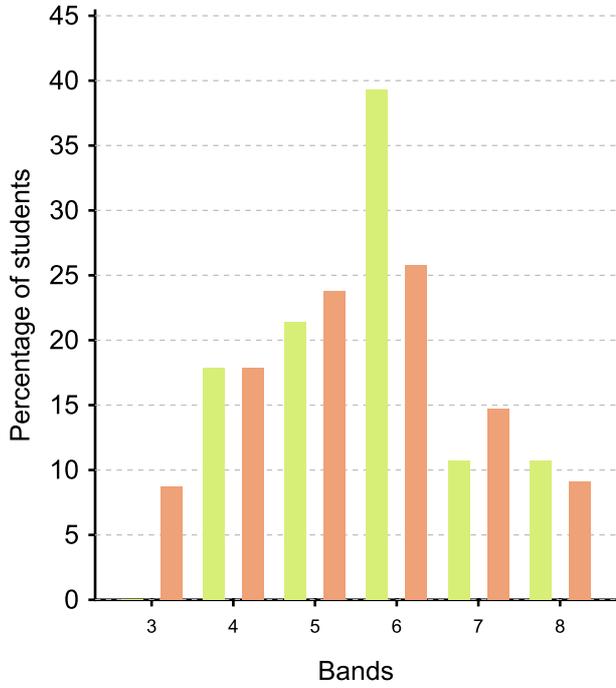
Percentage in bands:
Year 3 Spelling



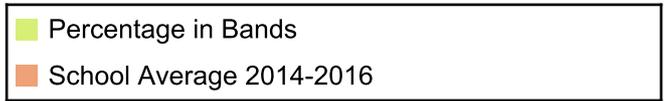
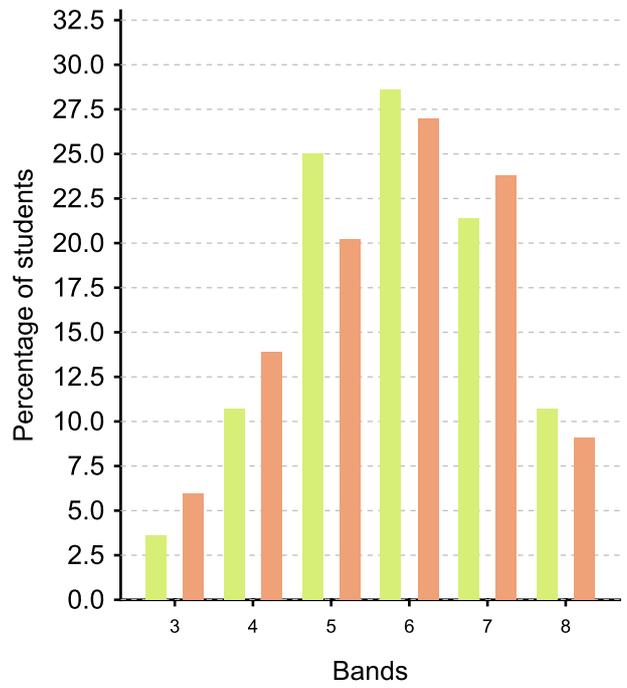
Percentage in bands:
Year 3 Writing



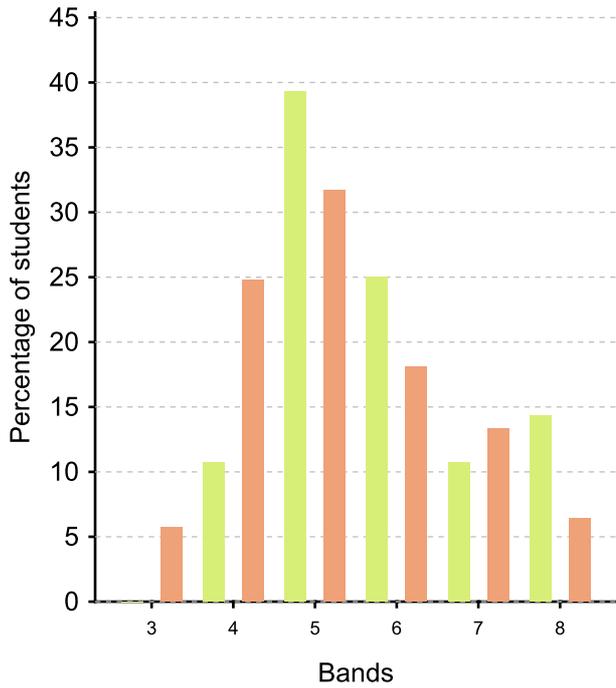
Percentage in bands:
Year 5 Grammar & Punctuation



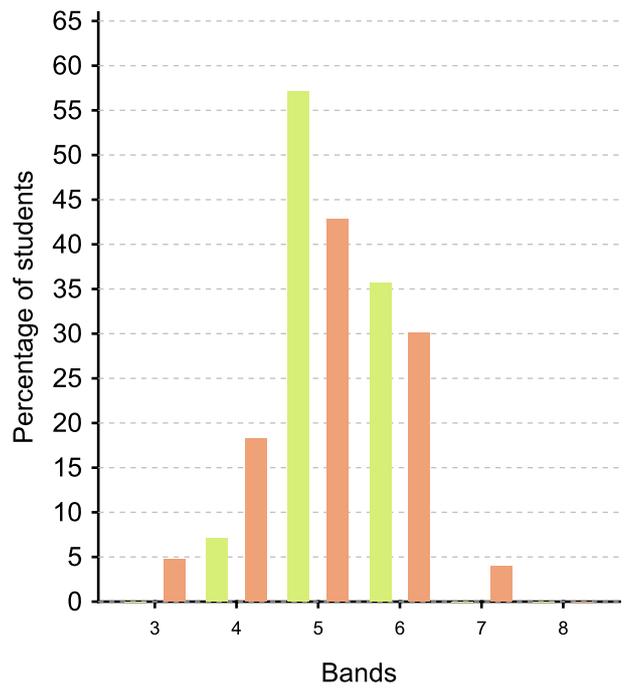
Percentage in bands:
Year 5 Spelling



Percentage in bands:
Year 5 Reading



Percentage in bands:
Year 5 Writing



Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

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

The majority of parents are actively involved in their children's education, either through direct contact with the school or through support for homework, extra-curricular activities and/or attendance at special celebrations.

Parents support ongoing acknowledgements of student academic, behavioural, extra-curricular and/or social achievements.

Students acknowledge that Heaton Public School is a place for learning and are increasingly aware that they are responsible for their own learning and behaviour.

Students demonstrate that they are caring towards and supportive of the wellbeing of other students.

Teachers have some concerns about the pace of change in education but are actively embracing such change.

In 2017 Heaton Public School will continue to participate in the Tell Them From Me survey to further enhance feedback opportunities across the whole-school community.

In 2017 Heaton Public School will hold a two afternoon planning days which involve the whole school community working to collaboratively develop the 2018–2020 School Plan.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Aboriginal Education was highly evident throughout 2016. It was embedded in our teaching –learning programs across all KLA's and was celebrated through performance and ceremony.

RAP

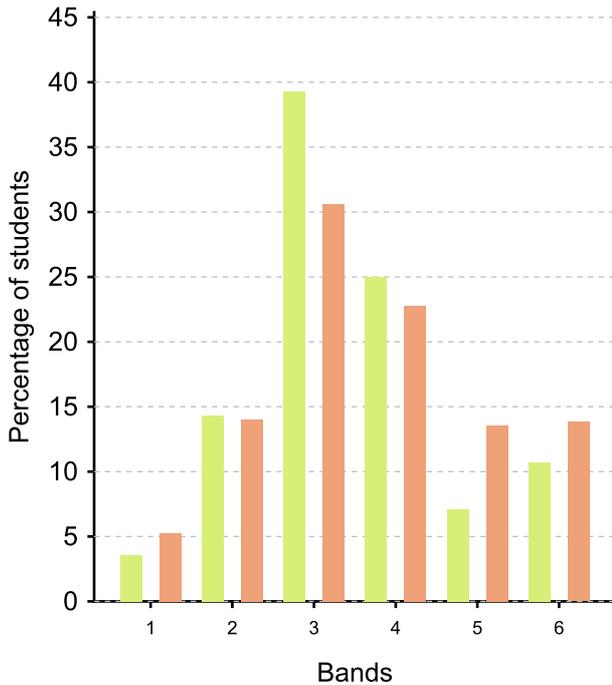
Our Reconciliation Action Plan was developed and is committed to Reconciliation through building relationships, extending respect and providing opportunities in our classrooms, around our school and with our community.

8 ways to learning pathways project

We completed the first stage of our 8 ways to learning pathways project.

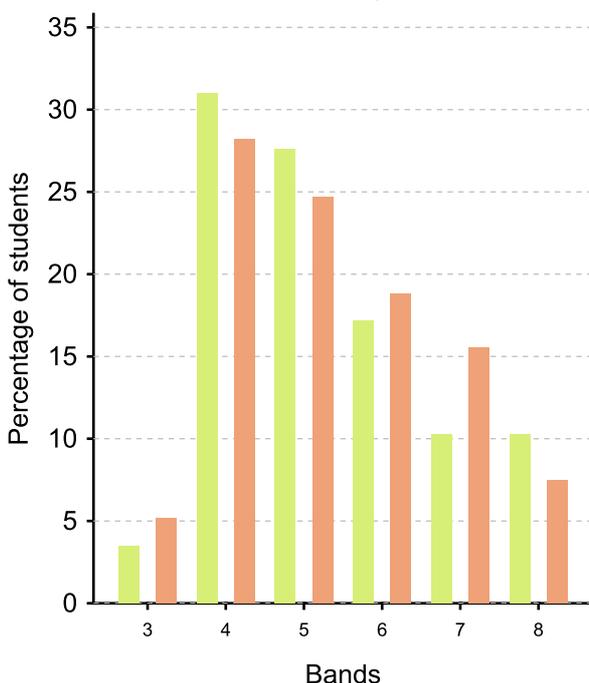
Our Yarning Space was completed and opened early term 2 with a whole school celebration and NAIDOC day of visitors and activities. We also planted our Reconciliation Tree and dedicated an area for reflection and peace. The final stage of this project will be

Percentage in bands:
Year 3 Numeracy



Percentage in Bands
School Average 2014-2016

Percentage in bands:
Year 5 Numeracy



Percentage in Bands
School Average 2014-2016

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.

completed this year with the 8 Ways Stones Welcome Circle, mural and Awabakal signage opened.

Native Sensory Garden

The Native Garden was a joint project with Callaghan College Jesmond Campus. It is now thriving and is proving a popular and special place for many of our children. It is a central part of the playground dedicated to Reconciliation.

National Anthem in Awabakal

Our choir led our National Anthem sung in Awabakal at the Recognition Award Ceremony .

Resource development

Our Aboriginal Education resources continued to be evaluated and updated. They were catalogued and placed in a dedicated location in our library.

Mgoals

Heaton Public School now has a site and video snapshots on the Mgoals program. Each Aboriginal child has a password and we are in the process of teaching them and their families how to access their page and add to it. These Mgoals will form the basis for the children's PLPs. Parents and families are an integral part of this process. The teachers attended an information session and will continue to develop their skills and use of them throughout 2017.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

There is a long tradition of English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) students attending Heaton Public School, and this has engendered among the other students, an understanding of how our EAL/D students, their experiences, cultural practices and customs enrich and enhance their own understanding of the broader world. During 2016 our school experience an influx on refugee students from countries such as Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Central Africa and worked hard to ensure that their transition to school and their new country was as smooth as possible.

In order to showcase these differences and highlight those attributes which all children have in common, the school organises activities which promote awareness, tolerance and inclusion of all. These include Harmony Day, cuisine specific days and CAPA performances. In addition, teaching staff incorporate culturally relevant stories, art and drama in their implementation of the curriculum.

The school has a designated Anti-Racism Contact Officer. Any incidents of racism, however seemingly innocently expressed, are dealt with and recorded, with the student/s involved counselled about the deleterious effects of racism in a developed society.

Heaton Public School greatly values the contribution our EAL/D students and their families bring to the harmonious and nurturing atmosphere which underpins

the ethos of the school.

Other school programs

Debating Report

Heaton Public School had three debating teams this year, taking students from Year 4 to Year 6. They participated in the locally run train-on competition for inexperienced debaters. These teams began the competition as timid speakers with limited understanding on how to write and debate an often difficult topic. As we had 3 teams in the same pool, we often debated Heaton against Heaton, which made for an interesting discussion in the audience! Our senior boys debated our junior boys in Round 1, arguing that sheep are better than cows. It was clear that age stands for nothing in a debate, as the junior boys outwitted the senior boys with great arguments including one concerning the versatility of wool. By the end of the 5 rounds, the teams displayed more confidence and well-thought out arguments and evidence. The adjudicators always commented on the persistence and growth that she was witnessing throughout the rounds. The skills that students have learnt in debating have strengthened their skills in the English curriculum: speaking and actively listening; writing a persuasive text and engaging and responding to an oral text. Well done to all our debaters!

Science and the Environment Heaton PS 2016

In Term 1 students K-6 participated in Clean Up Australia Day, cleaning up our school grounds and earning an ice block for their efforts! Also in Term 1, Year 6 elected their parliamentarians, including those responsible for the environment. These students monitor the classroom recycling program and assist in environmental activities around the school. Term 3 heralded National Science Week, with the theme being 'Drones, Droids and Robots'. So many exciting activities occurred that week! Paul Tooney, our Scientist in School partner from the University of Newcastle, visited to talk to all classes about what exactly were drones, droids and robots. We held a robot building competition, with categories such as largest, smallest and most creative robot. Wow, there were so many fabulous entries! The most exciting activity was the visit from UAVair who demonstrated a real drone. They were able to take some fantastic footage from high above our school. Their presentation to students highlighted the importance of drones in our community, from life-saving on the beach to postal delivery in remote areas. In Term 3 interested students from Years 3-6 enjoyed the challenge that is Wet and Wild. Wet and Wild is a research competition run by the Environmental Education Centre at Hunter Wetlands. Students are given a week to work out the 4 living things that the clues hint at. The competition runs for 3 weeks and gives students the opportunity to learn more about wetlands, in particular freshwater ponds. It can be a stressful few weeks but is also lots of fun! Term 3 also saw the presentation day for the Green Army who had been working on our creek rehabilitation, planting lots of native plants and installing some bush furniture. Our students love heading to the creek – in fact

students in 4/5H started up a Creek Club, encouraging all students to come to the creek for quiet activities on Thursday lunchtimes. We showed our appreciation for the Green Army by presenting each volunteer with a certificate. We hope Heaton Creek will be a place where students can engage with their local environment, caring for and enjoying this special space. 2016 also saw the start of GAT groups focusing on STEM. These small groups consisted of students in Stage 2 and 3 who held a keen interest/talent in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and/or Maths. Term 3 students focussed on gravity and energy to construct a marble roller coaster, while in Term 4 students participated in a 4 week Lego program, run by Bricks4Kidz.