

# Merewether Heights Public School Annual Report



2016



4416

## Introduction

The Annual Report for 2016 is provided to the community of Merewether Heights 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.

Steve Egginton

Principal

## School background

### School vision statement

Merewether Heights Public School delivers engaging, innovative and authentic curriculum-based education for all our students through explicit quality teaching and learning practices.

Highly accomplished and committed staff inspire students to realise individual goals by risk-taking, grasping opportunity and accepting challenge with grit as active, global, 21st century life-long learners.

Merewether Heights Public School prides itself on fostering school community partnerships where the best interests of the child are sought in a collaborative, positive and dynamic environment.

### School context

Merewether Heights PS is located in inner Newcastle approximately 2kms from the beach. It is in a high socio-economic area. The school enjoys the support of a very positive and supportive parent community. The community has high expectations of the school, wanting the very best for their children. This desire allows the school and community to work together to provide a well-balanced, quality educational experience to meet the needs of the individual child.

The school has a lovely playground with space for all the students. The infants and primary have their own play areas and there is room for the primary to play a number of sports and games.

The technology available in each room is ever changing to meet the needs of the students. Each classroom has an interactive whiteboard and a bank of computers. In addition to this there are a number of laptops and iPads that can move from room to room as the need presents itself.

The school is in an enviable position to have a very professional and dedicated staff that is committed to providing an education where each individual child is cared for and nurtured to achieve their full potential.

In 2016 there are 340 students enrolled into 14 classes. The students are supported by 1 Principal, 3 Assistant Principals, 13.49 teaching staff and 2.922 administration staff.

## Self-assessment and school achievement

### Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

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.

Specific measures taken to facilitate more effective student learning this year have included:-

- provision of stage-based planning days for teachers to collaboratively plan
- Professional Learning opportunities to explore and consolidate new syllabus teaching objectives
- tracking and monitoring student growth using PLAN software
- provision of activities based on student wellbeing e.g. Rock and Water, enrichment groups, fundamental moves program to allow opportunities for students to connect, succeed and thrive at stages relevant to their development.

Specific measures taken to facilitate more effective teaching this year have included:-

- introduction of lesson observations by supervisors and colleagues to specifically feedback about teaching practice that relates to the NSW Teaching Standards
- collaborative planning of engaging units of learning and authentic assessment tasks
- rigorous discussion around Professional Development Plans to ensure the goals reflect excellence and promote growth in the areas of need
- allowing teachers to nominate an area of expertise to deliver lesson content in that area, during enrichment groups

Specific measures taken to facilitate more effective leading this year have included:-

- establishing Rock & Water program to promote essential leadership skills of resilience, independence and self-

control

- engaging staff members to lead Professional Learning in areas of expertise
- giving teachers opportunity to share their Professional Learning experiences with the wider staff and community
- inviting community members into the school to lead an enrichment group based on their area of expertise

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 through development and practice is essential to achieve school excellence and contribute to sustained improvement in student learning.

Evidence-based, targeted and collaborative professional learning supports improved student outcomes by building personal and collective pedagogical practices. As an educational priority for quality teaching, the school aims to build a culture of innovation and best practice in a quality learning environment.

#### Overall summary of progress

Staff identified a need for a Professional Learning (PL) Team to facilitate professional learning within the school and, develop a process to attain external professional learning.

This team would support staff to develop their Professional Development Plans (PDP) by identifying their needs from their PDPs and following up with appropriate learning opportunities. They would also help develop trust in observation experiences and evaluate professional learning within the school to support staff needs.

The PL team was then formed and staff were grouped according to needs. These were then put together in a spread sheet to assist with monitoring how people were meeting their goals and how the PL team could facilitate staff training to support them. A meeting was held in February, Term 1, and decisions were made on how the team could support staff to meet their goals. It was decided to share professional learning opportunities at staff meetings and start to plan an overview of the year's professional learning.

At the end of Semester 1, the PDP needs spreadsheet was updated and that information was used to guide the planning process for professional development in Semester 2.

In Term 4, the team met again and reviewed the staff survey and started planning for 2017.

Staff appeared more confident completing PDPs, going through the process of review/evaluation and managing their professional learning. A new observation record sheet was introduced from Davina Bowen who led PL sessions on 'Observations and Effective Feedback'. Two observations were completed per staff member. One observation was conducted by each supervisor and the second by the supervisor or a colleague at the discretion of each staff member. Responses to observations were generally positive. However, some staff felt that the observations weren't as useful as they would like. This indicated a need for more training and encouragement for staff to be more specific in what they want observed in the future, so that they can receive more useful feedback.

Staff completed their self reflection logs, logged PD and reviewed the annual feedback completed with their supervisor. Staff also collected student data and evidence to support the completion of their goals.

Based on the needs identified in staff PDPs, a professional learning timeline was developed. Professional learning to meet the needs of the staff was spread over the year. Quality professional learning sessions were delivered on:

- Learning support procedures
- Performance development framework
- School excellence framework
- PLAN software
- English continuum
- English concept
- Super Six
- HSIE
- Science and Technology
- Observation and effective feedback
- Formative assessment
- Programming policy

A survey was designed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of professional learning within the school and

externally and to identify strengths and weaknesses in the process of staff developing PDPs, whether they thought the PL provided was effective and what direction they would like to see Professional Learning go in the future.

We attained significant information from the surveys and reviews that highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of our professional learning within the school. We were able to pinpoint exactly what was useful in helping staff attain their goals and what professional development was successful, which will allow us to guide our planning in 2017 in a more directed approach.

We didn't use all of the finance we requested as leading staff tended work in their own time. Leading staff found it overwhelming at times to maintain the support promised to staff to complete goals. Time was also reported as the most common reason for finding it difficult in completing goals so a more collaborative approach is necessary.

In future, a more thorough approach to maintaining staff support is necessary, as in, staff meetings to allow colleagues to collaborate on goals, leaders to take time to develop staff training opportunities and encourage staff to seek training and development outside of school.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		
Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
At least 95% of students will be at grade benchmarks indicated by PLAN data in literacy and numeracy.	Teaching staff are becoming more familiar with the PLAN software and all K-6 students have had their data entered in 2016. Executive staff have been tracking student progress and determining areas of need.	Teacher Release: \$500.00. Training during school staff meetings.
99% of Year 3 and Year 5 NAPLAN results will be at or above national means standards in all testing areas.	98% of Year 5 students are at or above national means standards. 97% of Year 3 students are at or above national means standards.	QTSS support for teacher development and planning: \$6200.00
Quality teaching and learning programs are evidenced by targeted and evidence-based professional development practice across the staff using the Guskey Evaluation tool at Level 5.	Targeted and evidenced based Professional Learning was provided to staff and this Professional Learning was evaluated by all staff in a survey that was based on Guskey's five critical levels of professional development evaluation. These survey results were collated and the results will be strongly considered when planning Professional Learning for 2017.	Course fees: \$8633.57 Teacher release: \$12635.49 Administration: \$2000.00

## Next Steps

- Direct staff to consider aligning PDP goals with colleagues to promote collaborative learning opportunities.
- Ensure Professional Development Committee has regular meetings throughout term to review progress, consider PL applications and monitor training opportunities..
- Publish Professional Learning schedule at beginning of each term to allow staff time to access readings, professional support and source suitable resources.
- Revise supervision guidelines to ensure that the supervision process, and the feedback given, is practical and appropriate.

## Strategic Direction 2

### Quality Learning Using a Differentiated Approach

#### Purpose

Differentiation is a response and process that enables equal opportunity in a learning environment.

Our goal is to maximise student growth and individual success through the provision of differentiated programs, development and analysis of meaningful assessment and use of collaborative, collegial planning strategies.

#### Overall summary of progress

Staff undertook Professional Development sessions that addressed the implementation of the new History/Geography syllabus, the new Science & Technology syllabus and the English concepts continuum. This Professional Development gave teachers the confidence to collaboratively prepare units of work based on these new documents.

Teachers were also given an introduction to the Focus on Reading comprehension program, primarily focusing on the 'Super Six' strategies, and were directed to resources that would assist them in the implementation of these strategies within their classroom.

Each week, teachers were able to provide feedback and teaching ideas at whole school staff meetings about resources and activities, based on the 'Super Six', they had used in their classrooms. This led to collaborative and constructive collegial discourse about the program and allowed teachers to critically analyse specific elements of the program and its role in their teaching and learning cycle.

Posters about the 'Super Six' comprehension strategies were provided to all classroom teachers and it was encouraged that they be displayed in all classrooms. These posters provided a consistent reference point for both teachers and students. Some teachers incorporated units of work that specifically addressed the 'Super Six' strategies within the teaching activities and reported that this was a great way to become familiar with the strategy and see the student's responses to the teaching.

During Terms 1 and 2, teachers were released from classrooms to collaboratively plan in Stage groups. They used this time to discuss new syllabus requirements, write units of work and plan quality assessment tasks. Support teachers from RFF, Library and LAST positions were also included in these days to ensure effective communication across the school.

A planning day for Term 3 was held on the first day of term, during our Staff Development Day. This day was utilised to ensure a smooth start to the school and to minimise budget expenditure for casual relief. The Term 4 planning time was held during an evening session and allowed all staff to effectively plan for their final teaching term of 2016. The evening session also minimised the expenditure required for casual relief and provided an opportunity for whole school collegial discussion between Stage groups.

Units that were planned during Stage planning opportunities focused on engaging content, differentiation of the curriculum and provision of meaningful assessment tasks. The units of work reflected the Professional Learning sessions that staff had undertaken in the areas of Focus on Reading, Science and Technology, History and Geography and the English Concept Continuum.

Staff developed rubrics and marking scales for their assessment tasks to ensure Consistency of Teacher Judgement was evident across each Stage. These assessment tasks and rubrics were then saved electronically to ensure equitable access for all teachers.

At the end of each term, teachers reviewed and evaluated Units of Learning and Assessment tasks to determine their effectiveness. This included reviews of assessment data, analysis of student engagement, learning growth and outcomes. This rigorous self-reflection allowed teachers to evaluate their teaching effectiveness and evidence to plan for the ongoing learning of students in their care.

## 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"> <li>• 100% of programs, assessment tasks and rubrics reflect current changes to pedagogy and curriculum.</li> </ul>	95% of programs, assessment tasks and rubrics reflected current changes to pedagogy and curriculum. Programming was done in a corporate and collegial manner during stage planning days and this ensured consistency within each stage.	Stage planning days: \$14,000.00
Quality teaching and learning programs are evidenced by targeted and evidence-based professional development practice across the staff using the Guskey Evaluation Tool at Level 5.	Targeted and evidenced based Professional Learning was provided to staff and this Professional Learning was evaluated by all staff in a survey that was based on Guskey's five critical levels of professional development evaluation. These survey results were collated and the results will be strongly considered when planning Professional Learning for 2017.	Teacher release: \$1500.00

## Next Steps

- Provide Professional Learning focus on the use of Formative Assessment for programming, teaching and differentiating.
- Schedule Stage-based planning days to maintain and promote effective collegial discourse and consistent programming strategies.
- Continue to enter data K-6 on PLAN software and access and utilise suggested teaching strategies from PLAN.



## Strategic Direction 3

### Quality Learning Environment

#### Purpose

The wellbeing of students and staff is of the utmost importance. To successfully meet the wellbeing of students and staff now and into the future, we must implement well planned and targeted programs.

To achieve this purpose we will utilise the knowledge and skills of both our teaching and community members.

#### Overall summary of progress

In Term 1, teachers K–6 worked together to formulate a Wellbeing Yearly Plan. This ensured that all Wellbeing programs were given adequate time for completion amongst our many other educational activities.

In 2016, seventeen staff members completed the Rock and Water training program which teaches social skills through physical activity with a focus on respect and concentration. Rock and Water lessons were introduced to the children through class activities. 100% of staff surveyed responded that Rock and Water was a very good program.

Genius Hour activities were conducted by a number of classes. In many of these classes the activities included a research component as well as a practical component. The response from the children towards working on a topic of their choice was very positive.

During Term 4, Enrichment Groups were held over a five week period. With the help of volunteer parents twenty activities K–6 were conducted. 91% of teachers surveyed responded that the Enrichment Groups created an excellent learning program.

Following training by Hunter/New England Health experts and the purchase of multiple sets of equipment, teachers conducted physical education activities that were SUPPORTIVE, ACTIVE, AUTONOMOUS, FAIR and ENJOYABLE. As a result of this approach during both P.E. and sport sessions the skills development of students K–2 achieved our 30% improvement target. In Years 3–6 P.E. lessons, Friday sport activities and specialist activities in athletics, gymnastics and basketball assisted the students to achieve our 30% skills development improvement target.

93% of our students did NOT attend Time Out during the year. Of the 7% who did attend 50% of incidences were from the playground and 50% from the classroom.

#### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
100% of teachers are following the wellbeing scope and sequence plan.	The wellbeing scope and sequence was reviewed and 100% of teachers are following the plan.	Teacher release: \$500.00
Students' fundamental movement skills assessments show a 30% improvement in skill levels.	Students K–6 showed a 30% improvement in their Fundamental Movement Skills.	Nil
Identifies high social needs students are showing a 20% reduction in Time Out visits.	There has been a reduction of more than 30% of attendance in Time Out by students identified as having high social needs.	Managed within existing school resources.
80% of students are achieving their planned learning goals in Genius Hour activities.	Genius Hour was conducted in selected classes and 82% of students achieved their planned learning goals during this time.	Resources: \$1200.00

#### Next Steps

- Review existing scope and sequence plan and adjust where necessary for 2017 program.
- Discuss staff welfare needs and explore initiatives to educate or create improved staff wellbeing.

- Develop a ten lesson per Stage sequenced Rock & Water program.
- Plan dates for 2017 implementation of Enrichment Group activities.

Key Initiatives	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
<b>Aboriginal background loading</b>	In 2016 we had six students identify as being Aboriginal. Key initiatives included the provision of Personalised Learning Plans, programming to include Aboriginal perspectives and regular committee meetings of the Aboriginal Education action team.	\$2831.96
<b>Low level adjustment for disability</b>	Students requiring extra support, who do not receive Integration funding, benefited from Individual Learning Plans and learning adjustments. Teacher professional learning and student support officers assisted student achievement.	\$13288.,00
<b>Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)</b>	This funding was used to provide opportunities for staff to view colleague's lessons, provide collaborative planning days for staff and to provide mentoring and support to staff that were establishing new programs within their classroom.	0.12 staffing allocation.
<b>Socio-economic background</b>	This funding was used to support students whose families were experiencing financial difficulty. Assistance was provided for excursions, fee relief and uniforms and ensured equitable access to resources.	\$5619.36

## Student information

### Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
Boys	167	174	169	175
Girls	147	160	165	165

### Student attendance profile

School				
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016
K	96	96.1	94.2	96.1
1	96.3	94.6	94.6	95.1
2	95.8	95.7	93.4	95
3	94.4	96.1	94.6	94.3
4	95.8	95	94.9	93.7
5	95.6	94	94.3	95.7
6	93.1	96.3	93.1	92.5
All Years	95.3	95.5	94.2	94.6
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

## Workforce information

### Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Assistant Principal(s)	3
Classroom Teacher(s)	12.19
Learning and Support Teacher(s)	0.5
Teacher Librarian	0.8
School Administration & Support Staff	2.92
Other Positions	0.12

\*Full Time Equivalent

<Use this text box to report on the Aboriginal composition of your school's workforce>

Delete text not required.

### Teacher qualifications

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

### Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	95
Postgraduate degree	5

### Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Professional learning is an integral part of the school culture and a shared commitment to changing teacher and leader practice. Professional learning is closely aligned to the school plan and is a organised to effectively utilise budget allowances, ensure equity of resources and allow for collaborative distribution of knowledge.

In 2016, quality professional learning sessions were delivered on:

- Learning support procedures
- Performance development framework
- School excellence framework
- PLAN software
- English continuum
- English concepts continuum
- Super Six comprehension strategies
- HSIE syllabus
- Science and Technology syllabus
- Observation and effective feedback
- Formative assessment
- Programming policy

- Rock and Water

A number of staff were maintaining their accreditation by logging their professional development as it was delivered. They were able to support each other to ensure the process was done in an efficient manner.

Executive staff and classroom teachers were given the opportunity to share their expertise by delivering professional learning sessions to the whole staff. This distribution of leadership led to a greater variety of professional learning sessions being able to be delivered and it allowed staff to take ownership of the delivery and direction of some elements of the professional learning journey.

## 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.

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from <insert date> to 31 December 2016.

	2016 <b>Actual</b> (\$)
<b>Opening Balance</b>	0.00
<b>Revenue</b>	549 093.15
(2a) Appropriation	419 919.03
(2b) Sale of Goods and Services	2 397.92
(2c) Grants and Contributions	125 067.10
(2e) Gain and Loss	0.00
(2f) Other Revenue	0.00
(2d) Investment Income	1 709.10
<b>Expenses</b>	-314 648.00
Recurrent Expenses	-314 648.00
(3a) Employee Related	-146 281.24
(3b) Operating Expenses	-168 366.76
Capital Expenses	0.00
(3c) Employee Related	0.00
(3d) Operating Expenses	0.00
<b>SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR</b>	234 445.15
<b>Balance Carried Forward</b>	234 445.15

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.

<Use this text box to enter a general statement describing:

- your school's financial management processes and governance structures to meet financial policy requirements
- any unusual spending patterns or substantial underspending/overspending (e.g. accommodating leave, illness, savings for planned capital expenditure)
- intended use of funds available>

Delete text not required.

### Financial summary equity funding

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

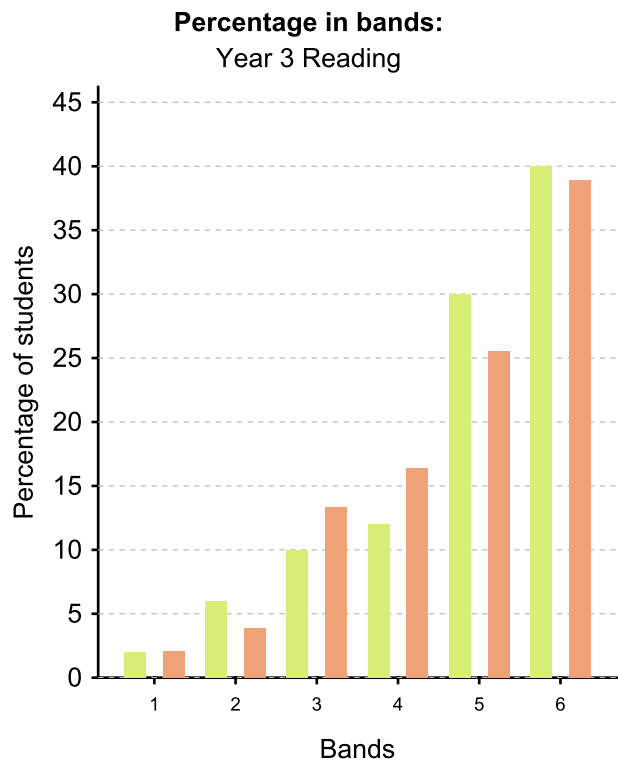
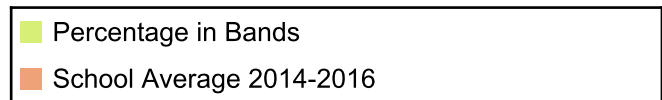
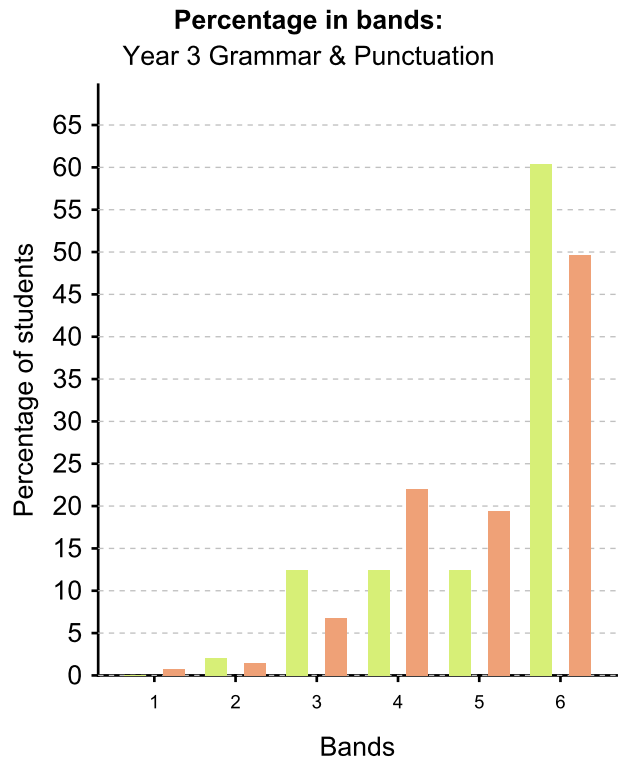
	2016 Actual (\$)
<b>Base Total</b>	2 276 550.81
Base Per Capita	18 023.54
Base Location	0.00
Other Base	2 258 527.27
<b>Equity Total</b>	74 460.59
Equity Aboriginal	2 831.96
Equity Socio economic	5 619.36
Equity Language	1 710.82
Equity Disability	64 298.44
<b>Targeted Total</b>	27 790.00
<b>Other Total</b>	13 501.51
<b>Grand Total</b>	2 392 302.90

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.

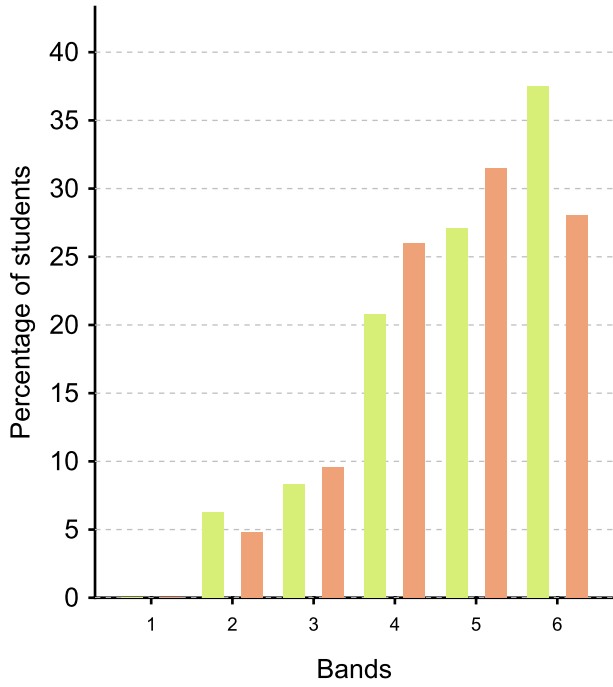
## School performance

### NAPLAN

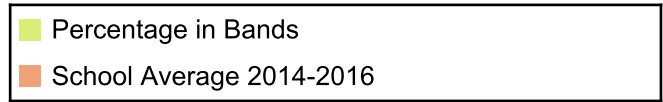
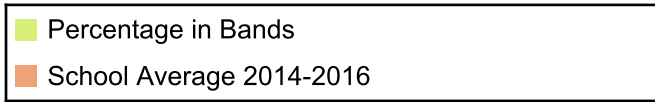
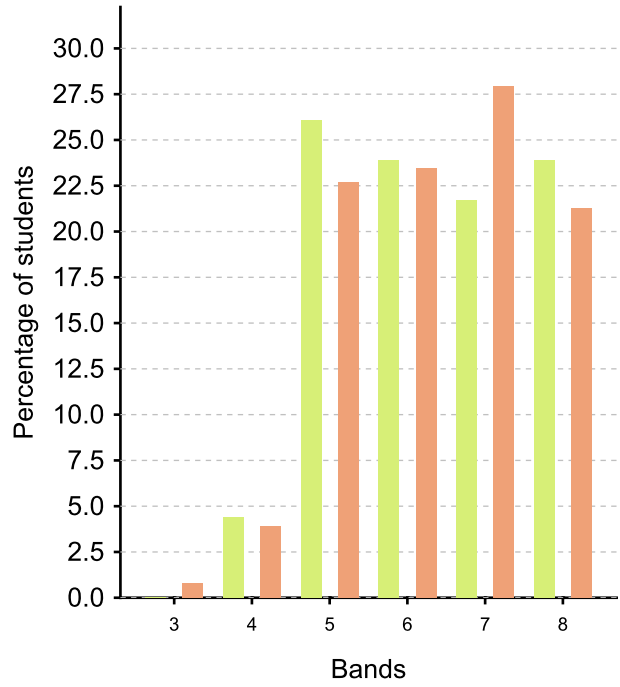
In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10. The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.



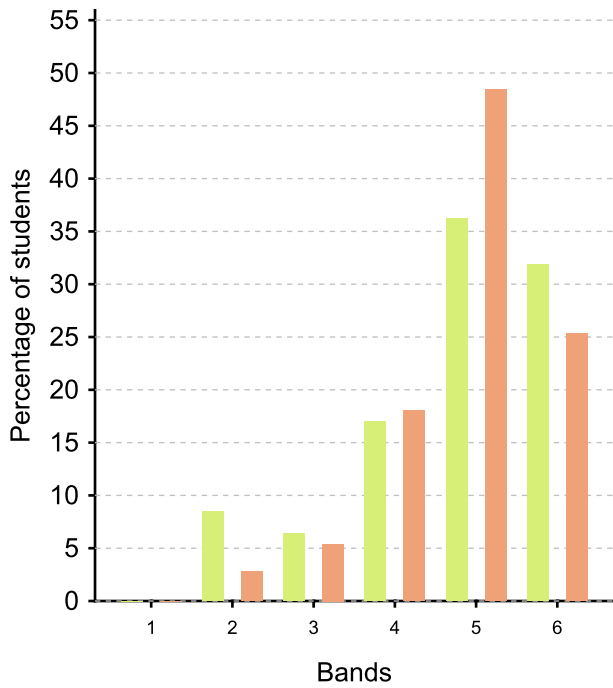
**Percentage in bands:**  
Year 3 Spelling



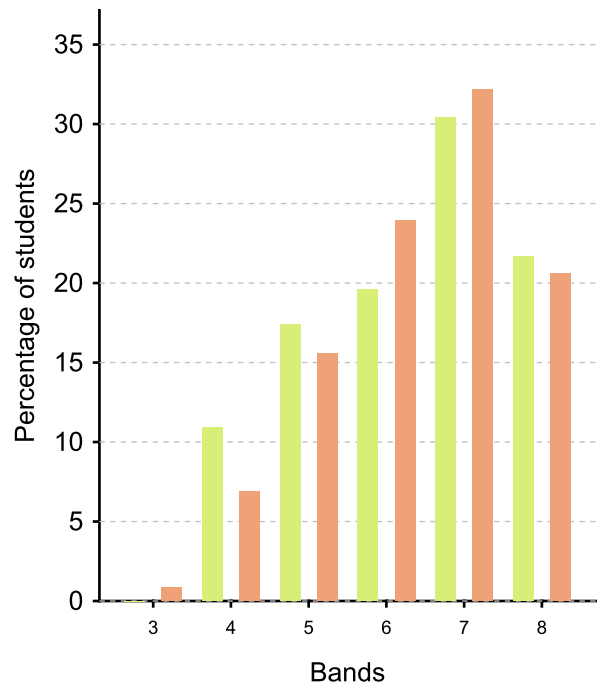
**Percentage in bands:**  
Year 5 Grammar & Punctuation



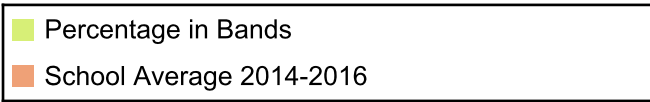
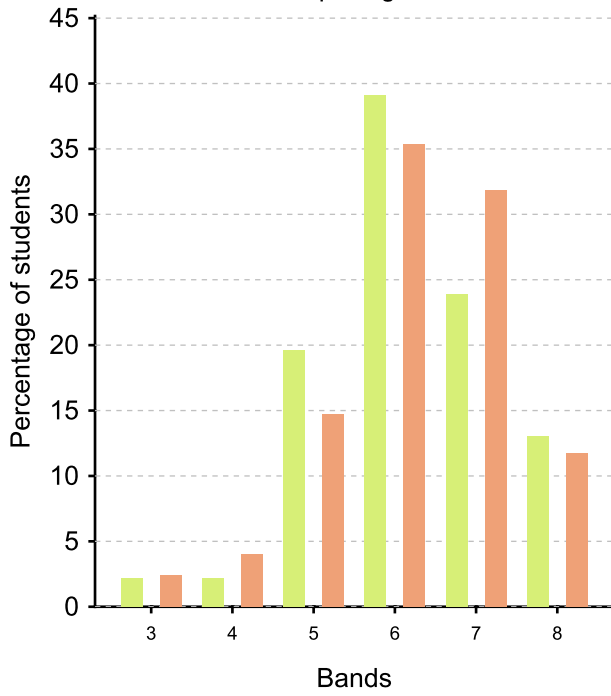
**Percentage in bands:**  
Year 3 Writing



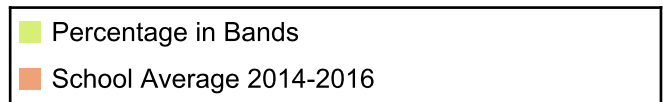
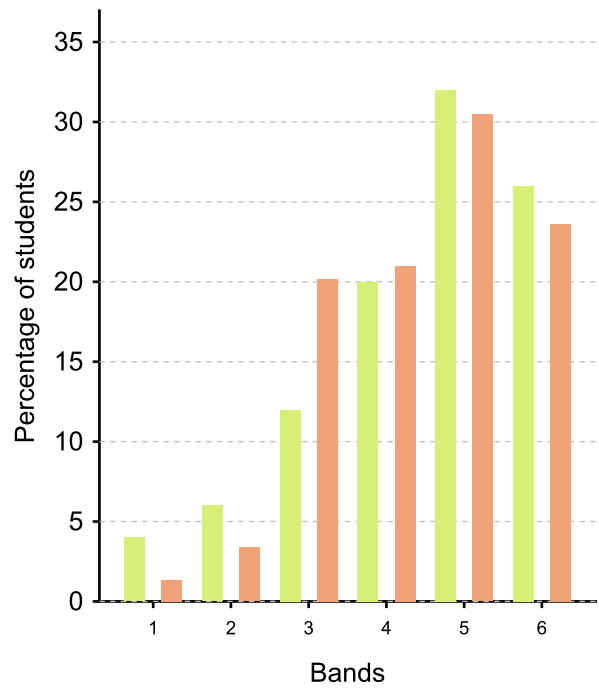
**Percentage in bands:**  
Year 5 Reading



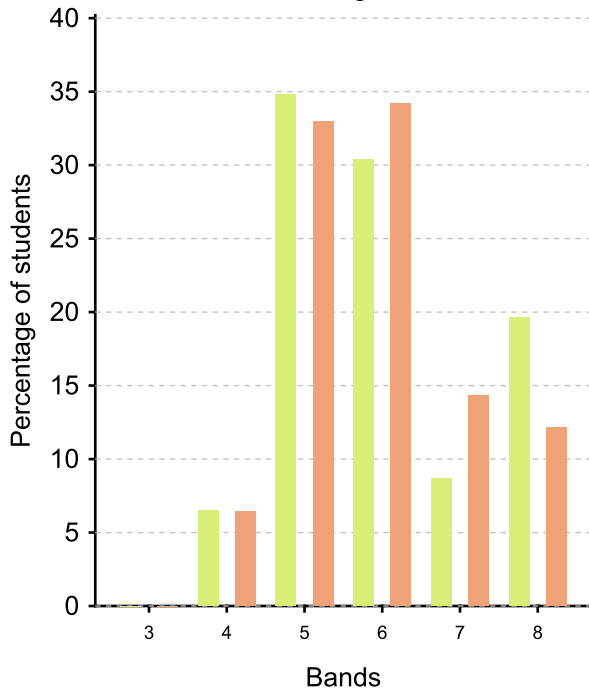
**Percentage in bands:**  
Year 5 Spelling



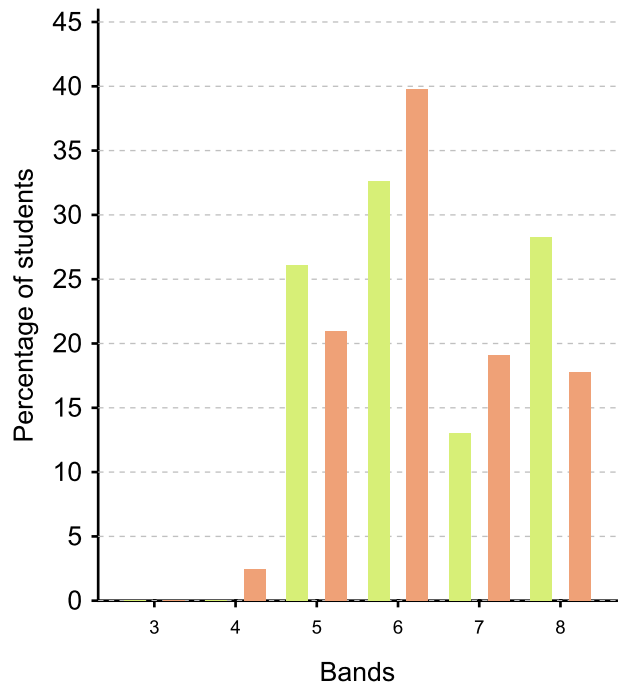
**Percentage in bands:**  
Year 3 Numeracy



**Percentage in bands:**  
Year 5 Writing



**Percentage in bands:**  
Year 5 Numeracy



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.



## Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Satisfaction with the school was determined by surveys, focus groups and open discussions. Below is a representation of the data received.

Parent feedback from focus group.

Overall, parents were very happy with the school and pleased with the teaching and learning opportunities that were offered in 2016. Some clarification was sought by parents around the issues of communication about school events, homework policy, canteen issues and the role of the Time Out room. Many parents indicated that they felt their child was engaged and productive during class activities and that they enjoyed their time in our playground. 93% of respondents agreed that the school provided a 'good educational experience' for their child.

Student feedback from survey

Random students were surveyed about their daily school life and their level of satisfaction. 90% of students indicated that they had enjoyed their class during 2016 and felt challenged by the work. A small percentage of students indicated that they would like to have more Physical Education sessions but 98% agreed that the Rock and Water program was an enjoyable part of their learning program. 92% of students said they enjoyed time in our playground and had friends to play with. Most agreed that teachers dealt with any problems in the playground swiftly and fairly and only 2% of students indicated that they thought the playground was not a good place for them.

## Policy requirements

### Aboriginal education

In 2016

Students were provided with lessons on the importance and significance of National Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week. In an effort to acknowledge and recognise National Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week all teachers were given a bound copy of Traditional Aboriginal Games. Year Six students led the whole school in an afternoon of traditional games.

All students participated in Naidoc celebrations which involved:-

- Students being invited to wear the colours of the Aboriginal flag and attend a Naidoc performance "Let's Bridge the Gap" Fred Reid.
- Students given the opportunity to purchase NAIDOC merchandise which support "Koori Kids" community initiatives program.
- Students being given the opportunity to participate in a writing competition 3-6 and art competition K-2 which showcased their understanding of these important events. This

culminated in a whole school Naidoc assembly. Bush tucker garden established and growing well. In an effort to increase the value of embedding Aboriginal perspectives into our integrated units of work, classes have been utilising our garden.

Stage Two were involved in a cultural immersion/incursion of the Awabakal language and culture

The school has an Aboriginal Education Action Team which comprises of a representative teacher from each stage as well as other interested staff members and holds meetings throughout the year.

Efforts were made to develop a partnership with our local AECG with staff attending local AECG meetings.

Future Goals for the next 12 months

- Continue to develop a partnership with our local AECG.
- Continue to provide teacher professional development in the area of Aboriginal Education.
- Continue to develop and increase Aboriginal Community involvement within Merewether Heights Public School.
- Organise to teach the whole school the National Anthem in the Awabakal language.

### Multicultural and anti-racism education

Multicultural perspectives were incorporated into all Key Learning Areas during the year. Connections to cultural diversity were also made on a class, grade and school level through artworks, speeches, multimedia presentations and writing activities. Merewether Heights Public School celebrated Harmony Day with special class activities, singing, interactive technology activities and a whole school assembly. We investigated the cultural heritage of our students and were surprised at just how culturally diverse our community is.