

Merewether High School

Annual Report



2016



Introduction

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

Christine Rippon

Principal

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Message from the Principal

2016 was once again an exciting year for the school and the achievements of our students and staff in many fields of endeavour are outlined in this report. Rizina Yadav was one of five students from across the state to receive a Marie Bashir Peace Award from the National Council of Women of NSW. The Year 7 and 8 Debating team, George McNamara, Mackenzie Gilligan, Evina Yadav, Ella Simons and Aleeyah Clifford won the state championship, our Under 15 years Boys' Water Polo team won the state championship, the Year 10 Debating team, Rosanna Gately, Tom Su, Lucy Witherdin and Callum Donnelly were second and our Open Boys' Water Polo runners up in the state. The 2016 Year 12 cohort were the first to complete their HSC after sitting their first accelerated subject in 2015. Once again we experienced individual performances on a state, national and international level across a variety of arenas. Sharvil Kesarwani won a gold medal as part of the Australian Mathematical Olympiad competition and was invited to represent Merewether High School at the 2016 AMOC Selection School. Abby Butler and Samyuktha Sethumadhavan represented as members of the NSW Youth Parliament 2016 where Abby was elected as the Youth Premier of the NSW Youth Parliament and Sammy to the position of leader of the Legislative Council. Rizina Yadav was named the State Winner of the Lions Youth of the Year competition, after moving through the local, district and state finals. Rizina and Fia Sankoorikal made the Grand Final of the NSW Evatt competition, placing first. Lucy Witherdin, Fia Sankoorikal and Rizina competed in the finals of the national round of the Mock United Nations Assembly (MUNA). The girls came second overall out of twenty-five teams from around Australia. Jacob Gamble, won a Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship travelling to France and the region of Ypres in Belgium. In the sporting arena Matthew Humby, Mitchell Robinson and Brendan Ward were named in the New South Wales Combined High Schools' Water Polo team. Matthew and Mitchell were subsequently named in the NSW All-Schools team to contest the Australian Championships. Mitchell and Matthew also represented Australia with the Born 2001 Water Polo team in Europe. Davis Harara and Tobias Atallah were selected into the NSW CHS Rugby Union team. Milly Stephenson was the state CHS and NSW All Schools Champion in the 100 and 200 metre sprints at the NSW CHS and NSW All Schools Athletics Carnivals. Kaiya King was named the NSW Under 15 Champion in trampolining. Aidan Watling was named in the NSW CHSSA Merit Team 2016 and selected in the under 15 NSW All Schools AFL team. Angela Williams as a result of her performances in the NSWCHS Netball team received a State Sporting Blue. Again this year we saw the many opportunities our students have to enhance the all-round education we strive to make available for our students. The camps, excursions, guest speakers, performances and challenges for all students in the form of state wide competitions. Our Performing and Creative Arts continues to grow and offer many opportunities for our students. Our instrumentalists and vocalists performed at the Sydney Town Hall and the Opera House, continued to win at Eisteddfods and Bandfest and represented our school at Star Struck and Schools' Spectacular. Our student leaders continue to be active and involved young citizens of whom we can be immensely proud. Their enormous school spirit and ability to represent student views within the school, the wider community of the school and the Hunter Region is increasingly evident. I would like to congratulate everyone for their contribution to Merewether High School.

School background

School vision statement

Merewether High School is an inspirational model of public education. We challenge our gifted and talented students to engage with a vigorous and collaborative understanding of lifelong learning. Students are supported to achieve excellence in all aspects of school life. Our school community motivates students to become conscientious and responsible citizens within the local and broader communities. Our school is a supportive learning environment where the individual talents of each student are nurtured and students are encouraged to reach their potential while maintaining balance and a positive attitude. Merewether High School has a culture that is conducive to productivity, with superior resources, technology and staff.

School context

Merewether High School is an academically selective high school with 88 staff, catering for 1080 students from a wide geographical area within the Hunter Central Coast Region. The school offers a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum focusing on high expectations of student academic achievement. Merewether High School is committed to developing the whole student through academic, sporting and cultural endeavours. Students are encouraged to participate in leadership, creative and performing arts programs and sporting pursuits along with a range of extra-curricular activities as well as their academic studies. The school has high expectations of all students, consistent with each student's ability and the belief that all students can achieve their personal best. Our experienced staff supports the needs of our academically gifted and talented students. A significant feature of the school is that it is a caring community, committed to excellence, diversity and fostering individual talents. The development of technology is ongoing with continued access to applications that enhance teaching and learning. The school has an active parent body that supports the school through a variety of programs. Merewether High School has established a number of important links with the community to strengthen student outcomes by supporting student academic and welfare development. Our three core values are integrity, diversity and excellence.

Self-assessment and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

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

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

Our executive staff and staff discussed the School Excellence Framework and its implications for informing, monitoring and validating our journey. Time was dedicated in staff meetings and executive meetings to examine the school plan to ascertain those areas of the School Excellence Framework that we had addressed. Staff and students reflected on our progress made against the domains of the framework.

In the domain of Learning, curriculum and learning has had emphasis. Our major focus has been on the ongoing development of high quality teaching and learning strategies for Gifted and Talented students. Staff consolidated their knowledge through completion of purposeful and targeted professional learning to ensure their classroom practice was evidence based and reflected the needs of our G&T learners, so as to engage them in rich learning experiences, developing the vital learning skills needed to flourish. This was further established through the key learner skills audit and the development of a consistent approach to building students learning skills. The continuation of the accelerated learning program has ensured that curriculum provision meets student learning needs and through establishing strong links with relevant community partners, curriculum programs and teaching practices effectively support all students to achieve their potential. This is achieved through using evidenced based teaching practices and innovative delivery mechanisms to engage students. Ongoing evaluation of key curriculum programs such as the IBL program has led to innovative developments and achievements in curriculum, responding to community expectations. In the area of assessment and reporting, consistent practices were reinforced to support students in their personal reflection on learning. This was conducted through the academic review program and learning reflection meetings. Further systems to ensure consistency in assessment practice, feedback to students and consistency of teacher judgement were implemented to support whole school and KLA assessment practices. In addition, parents continued to engage positively with the school, with parent learning groups an embedded practice for parents to connect and understand the learning progress of their children and how to effectively support them to learn. In the area of school culture, stakeholders evaluated current school values and founded a new set of values reflective of the school community and its expectations with which to commence the new school year in 2017.

Our major focus in the domain of Teaching has been on the development of data skills in all staff and the use of data to inform practice. Through professional learning groups, staff meetings and school development days, staff have developed an increased knowledge and sophisticated understanding of student assessment and data and the significance of this to inform future planning. All staff engage in the analysis of external data to evaluate teaching and learning programs, identify individual student needs and faculty or subject specific directions. Teachers utilise assessment for, as and of learning to determine directions and their individual and collective effectiveness. Teachers, through professional learning groups have collaborated across and within faculties to ensure consistency of delivery, including curriculum differentiation and consistency of teacher judgement.

In the domain of Leading, our priorities have been focused on school resources and management practices and processes. These have included a review of our assessment policies and these being clearly communicated to all stakeholders, analysis of the Year 9 Inquiry Based Learning program and the implementation of new processes to better meet the needs of our students, the review of all teaching and learning programs, with feedback provided to all staff and the monitoring of the implementation of the NSW Syllabus in Years 7 –10 English, Mathematics, Science and History. ICT Infrastructure and the development of this to support student learning and staff teaching and administration purposes has also continued to be a focus. Upgrades to staffrooms and available technology have occurred, network drives have been rationalised and available technologies within classrooms upgraded to ensure access to the latest technologies is available. Communication has continued to be a major focus with year meetings clearly established within our school routines, the school bulletin available via the website and the skoolbag app available for parents to enhance our communication strategies. Parent Learning Groups continue to be a major program in the school and gives parents access to information to help them to support their children in their learning program. Our management practices are consistently reviewed and communicated through executive, staff and faculty meetings, via weekly assemblies for our students and via the bulletin, P&C meetings and at Parent Learning Groups.

The achievements and identification of next steps are outlined in the following pages of this report. Our self-assessment process will further assist the school to refine the strategic priorities in our School Plan leading to further improvements in the delivery of a quality education to our students.

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

Student success as learners and leaders

Purpose

Develop a challenging 21st century learning environment that promotes creativity and autonomous learning, and embeds cognitive technologies into differentiated curriculum to enhance learning outcomes for all students. Develop a comprehensive whole school approach to promoting emotional intelligence and wellbeing for all students.

Overall summary of progress

Our whole school focus on learning skills development for all students has had significant impact on student well-being and leadership opportunity. A skills audit conducted through 2016 provided direction for the explicit incorporation into teaching, learning and assessment of skills building. Student confidence and parental understanding is evident and a clearer understanding of learning and study processes and support structures. The ongoing development of our engaging and challenging curriculum contributes to quality student learning. Specific whole school focus on task design linked to clear criteria and highly informative feedback has increased engagement and performance. This is evidenced through Data Analysis of from internal and external assessment. Continued promotion of Student Leadership pathways through SRC, Prefects and Leadership Passport program provides direction and challenge in these areas. The establishment of Student Mentor program and a proactive focus on the Well Being Framework has promoted happy, supported learners. Improved learning environments for all has provided greater flexibility and options for differentiation and individualised learning. Progress in the redesign of learning spaces has stimulated students and staff to incorporate innovative strategies to challenge Gifted and Talented learners. Targeted study support for senior students before and after school in our Independent Learning Centre extends the web of support in our learning community.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
100% of HSC and external competition results place Merewether High students above state average. (2014 – 88%)	HSC data analysis indicated student performance above state average. Students demonstrated high level achievement (greater than 90%), above state average in external competitions. Staff undertook detailed data analysis and feedback to students on performance to inform future participation. Explicit teaching of exam skills, study strategies, wellbeing and writing for purpose.	\$100 000.00 School and Community Funds Staff Time
Maintain greater than 70% of HSC student results at band 5 and 6 level. (2014 – 72.9%)	In 2016 70.5% of all results were Band 5 or a Band 6. Ongoing support of stage 6 students in study and exam skills development. Steps for HSC success, Independent Karen Jaeger English Writing Workshops.	Independent Learning Centre tutors \$10 000.00 Elevate Education \$6700.00 General Purpose Funds
95% of Year 9 students achieve in the proficient bands for numeracy and reading in NAPLAN. (2014 – 93%)	Targeted Numeracy and Writing workshops for Year 9 students to develop skills in analysis and presentation. Analysis of Year 7 NAPLAN and ICAS data to identify students at risk and strategies for ongoing skills development.	Staff Time

Next Steps

- Ongoing refinement of assessment preparation and study skills for Stages 4, 5 and 6.
- Implementation of well-being framework.
- Establishment of whole school writing policy.
- Expansion of literacy and numeracy support.
- Review of classroom innovations for possible expansion.

Strategic Direction 2

Staff leading innovative practice and connecting with others

Purpose

Enhance a school culture where staff members take responsibility for their own ongoing learning, striving for innovation and improvement and who make strong connections within and beyond the school. Develop a comprehensive whole school approach to promoting emotional intelligence and wellbeing for all staff.

Overall summary of progress

A strong culture of professional support and growth has been established through a comprehensive induction program for all new staff to the school. This program has been enhanced through the engagement of key staff as program coordinators for their areas of responsibility across the school. All staff completed the PDP process with goals aligned to the Australian professional teaching standards. Targeted professional learning and mentoring was offered to teachers seeking higher accreditation with a number of staff continuing that process. All teachers seeking accreditation both permanent and temporary were supported and successfully achieved their accreditation. All staff across the school have accessed combinations of internal and external professional learning to achieve professional growth. Staff activities for personal and professional wellbeing were integrated into the schools calendar with specific events occurring and being well attended across each term. Professional Learning has targeted Gifted and Talented Education with staff completing the UNSW Mini Certificate of Gifted Education. Additional professional learning was a focus of all staff meetings with a school PL plan developed from the target areas identified within staff PDP's aligned with the school plan. A focus group completed the QT rounds training and engaged in further PL as leaders of the QT rounds programs for Masters Students with a view to ongoing development of this initiative in 2017. Progress in this area has enabled staff to provide sustained and improved quality teaching for Gifted and Talented students with extensive and purposeful feedback consolidated into practice.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
100% of staff have participated in cross KLA professional learning groups.	Throughout 2016 staff were provided with regular professional learning opportunities through staff meetings in addition to the UNSW Mini COGE program engaged all staff in cross KLA learning and development. Staff indicated that the learning was highly relevant to their work in the classroom and had enhanced their understanding and practice.	\$32 000.00 Professional Learning Funds
100% of staff members involved in ongoing professional learning and reflection, using the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers as reference.	Through focused professional learning on teaching standards, staff increased their knowledge and confidence in aligning professional learning to standards. All staff accessed professional learning, all teaching staff completed the 2016 PDP process with some staff aligning personal and professional reflection to teaching standards.	\$24 000.00 Professional Learning Funds

Next Steps

- Community engagement in changing requirements for New HSC.
- Review school assessment policies aligned with New HSC.
- Development of teaching and learning programs and resources to support implementation of New HSC 2018.

Strategic Direction 3

Systems leadership and collective efficacy

Purpose

Establish whole school communication strategies and collaborative decision making practices, whilst enhancing a culture of collective leadership throughout the school community, developing quality organisational practices and ICT infrastructure that supports every student and teacher to excel and learn to their full potential.

Overall summary of progress

Communication has been consolidated through the continuation of regular year meetings to ensure students have access to the information they require to maximise their learning. This process has also helped to develop a sense of community within each year group. The website and Parent Learning Groups continue to support parents through comprehensive engagement with school systems and practices to develop a clearer understanding of our purpose. The information sessions provided for parents on curriculum structures and available curriculum for each year group is another area that has consolidated communication. ICT has continued to be developed through the ongoing development of school infrastructure. New interactive boards, the inclusion of pod classrooms and the upgrading of the technology in the school hall have all had significant impact on school practice. School wide procedures in relation to assessment, reporting and feedback and the implementation of the school procedures document have been clearly communicated to staff and helped to consolidate our teaching and learning practices.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
100% of staff demonstrate an awareness of school operational systems, assessment and reporting practices, feedback expectations and organisational structures.	Throughout 2016 staff were provided with procedures in relation to assessment and reporting, feedback expectations and organisation structures through staff meetings, regular email contact, faculty meetings and staff handbook. Staff indicated a clear understanding of the school operational systems.	\$4500.00 General Purpose Funds
50% of teachers are confident in using learning technologies to maximise 21C learning opportunities for students.	Through focused professional learning on using technology to maximise learning, staff indicated an increased confidence in their abilities to integrate ICT in lessons. Staff indicated a need to continue updates as new technologies arise.	\$4540.00 Professional Learning Funds
90% of staff and students communicate through online platforms.	Moodle has become the major reference site for students to access and engage with many resources to support their learning. Staff communicate with students via the student portal to increase communication in relation to learning, assessment and feedback.	\$25 050.00 Computer Coordinator Funds

Next Steps

- Use of Skoolbag to link to the School Bulletin each month.
- Review of the school's BYOD policy.
- Continue building the school website.
- Professional learning enhancement for staff in technology.
- Consistent review of school policies and procedures to ensure these align with DoE policy.
- Continue the development of Pod classrooms.

Key Initiatives	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
Aboriginal background loading	English, Mathematics and Science tutors were engaged to support our Aboriginal students through the Independent Learning Centre. The Aboriginal students who completed the HSC in 2016 all received their first choice offer to University. A Connection to Country experience was offered to all Aboriginal students where students and a friend completed a tour of Aboriginal cultural sites learning more about Aboriginal culture within the local area. Wollotuka program I Believe with Newcastle University was completed with students accessing university life and future study and career aspirations. All students completed PLPs working towards their aspirational goals.	\$11 444.00 RAM Aboriginal Background Funding \$8 100.00 General Purpose Funds
Low level adjustment for disability	Permanent SLSo and .4 LaST employed to support teachers and students in the development of skills and strategies to meet the needs of students with disabilities in classrooms. Students with IEPs and Health Care Plans were supported and staff informed through regular staff meetings.	\$101 814.00 Low Level Adjustment Disability Funding
Socio-economic background	Support for students has continued with financial assistance provided to assist families engage with school programs and activities where required, inclusive of the whole of year school camps in Year 7, Year 9 and Year 11. All students continue to be provided with a student diary to enhance their organisation and provide them with tools for learning. The consolidation of the senior school study skills sessions has been highly beneficial to students with 97% of students indicating that they would recommend the program to others. Comprehensive leadership and reward programs continue to benefit all students with programs recognising student achievement and success accessible to all students.	\$18 345.00 RAM Socio-Economic Background Funding \$23 000.00 General Purpose Funds

Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
Boys	599	609	614	596
Girls	485	478	468	477

Merewether High School is the academically selective school for the Hunter Region with an enrolment of 1073 students. It has a strong focus on catering for the educational needs of gifted and talented students as 21st century learners.

While the gender balance within each year group has varied over time, a slight predominance of male students is evident within the school.

Student attendance profile

School				
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016
7	97.7	97.9	96.9	97.2
8	95.4	96.6	96.3	95.7
9	95.8	95.2	95	96
10	96.6	95.5	94.6	94.4
11	95.8	96	94.7	94.6
12	96.2	94.1	95.4	94.2
All Years	96.3	95.9	95.5	95.4
State DoE				
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016
7	93.2	93.3	92.7	92.8
8	90.9	91.1	90.6	90.5
9	89.4	89.7	89.3	89.1
10	87.7	88.1	87.7	87.6
11	88.3	88.8	88.2	88.2
12	90.1	90.3	89.9	90.1
All Years	89.9	90.2	89.7	89.7

Student attendance rates are consistently above Hunter area and State averages. This is a reflection of the commitment shown by students and their parents and their high level of engagement in school life.

Post-school destinations

Proportion of students moving into post-school education, training or employment	Year 10%	Year 11%	Year 12%
Seeking Employment	0.5	0	0
Employment	0	0	0
TAFE entry	0	0	0
University Entry	0	0	99
Other	2	0	1
Unknown	0	0	0

Students from Merewether High School typically advance to University after the completion of their HSC. In 2016 a student left school at the end of Year 10 to move into employment, and another 2% of the cohort chose to change schools at the end of Year 10 due to subject availability.

Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

In 2016 there were 23 students who were enrolled in the Hospitality vocational course, including 13 students in the Accelerated Hospitality class. Nine students received Careerlinks Work Placement Excellence Awards.

Students have continued to support local community organisations including OzHarvest through food preparation and donations. The commercial kitchen is being utilised as a community resource, with OzHarvest holding their "Cooking for a Cause" program in our facilities.

Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational education qualification

As Hospitality is offered as an accelerated course and students completed this in Year 11 there were no students who completed their HSC in 2016 as the student have continued into Year 12 and will complete their HSC in 2017.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	2
Head Teacher(s)	11
Classroom Teacher(s)	54
Learning and Support Teacher(s)	0.4
Teacher Librarian	1
School Counsellor	1
School Administration & Support Staff	13.57
Other Positions	1.4

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

The Indigenous composition of the Merewether High School staff is 2%.

Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	72
Postgraduate degree	28

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

All staff accessed professional learning coordinated and delivered within the school. The school professional learning plan was developed in alignment with staff PDP's and the school plan. Internal professional learning was a focus of all staff meetings and addressed a range of areas inclusive of Professional Teaching Standards, quality observations, the AITSL self reflection tool, learning adjustments for students, Curriculum Differentiation, underachieving Gifted and Talented students, technology in teaching and learning along with other mandatory training. All staff engaged with the UNSW Mini Certificate of Gifted Education through the school development days. Fifty-nine staff members accessed additional professional learning through school funds to attend courses and workshops specific to their professional and curriculum learning needs. Quality processes were implemented to support teacher accreditation within the school. A comprehensive induction program inclusive of processes for accreditation was delivered for all staff new to the school. Three staff successfully achieved accreditation with the NSWIT. Executive staff, were trained in support processes for supervising and supporting teachers requiring accreditation. Specific

professional learning was held to support higher level accreditation processes. All temporary and permanent teachers were able to access teacher accreditation, maintenance and higher level accreditation support as required.

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

Financial information

This summary financial information covers funds for operating costs to 30 November 2016 and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance. The balance carried forward has been allocated to unpaid goods on order, unpaid casual salaries, savings for a tiered learning space and major asset replacement.

Income	\$
Balance brought forward	863 040.00
Global funds	859 538.00
Tied funds	245 710.00
School & community sources	1 069 600.00
Interest	23 377.00
Trust receipts	502 204.00
Canteen	0.00
Total income	3 563 472.00
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	275 234.00
Excursions	358 472.00
Extracurricular dissections	208 334.00
Library	24 820.00
Training & development	1 166.00
Tied funds	294 322.00
Short term relief	238 735.00
Administration & office	240 503.00
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	138 968.00
Maintenance	82 142.00
Trust accounts	554 033.00
Capital programs	404 142.00
Total expenditure	2 820 876.00
Balance carried forward	742 595.00

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.

Year 9 Reading

In 2016 87.6% of Year 9 students placed in the top 2 bands of reading with 50% achieving Band 10. Student representation in the top 2 bands was significantly higher than across the State. When compared to other selective high schools, MHS had 7.4% more Year 9 students achieving Band 10 for reading. 65.5% of Year 9 students demonstrated greater than, or equal to, expected growth between Year 7 and Year 9.

Year 9 Writing

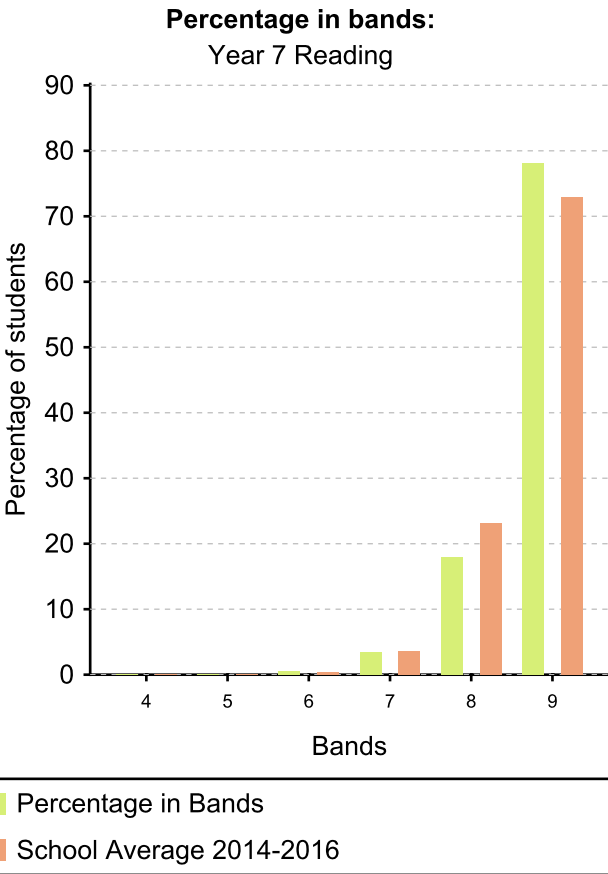
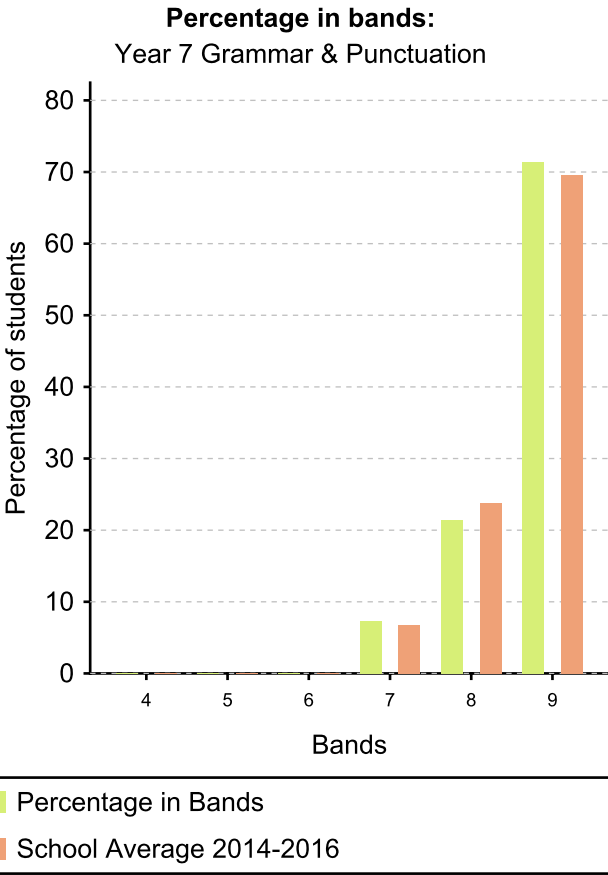
40% of Year 9 students achieved results in the top 2 bands of writing with 15.6% in Band 10 and 24.4% in Band 9. Results for this group were significantly higher than across the State.

Year 7 Reading

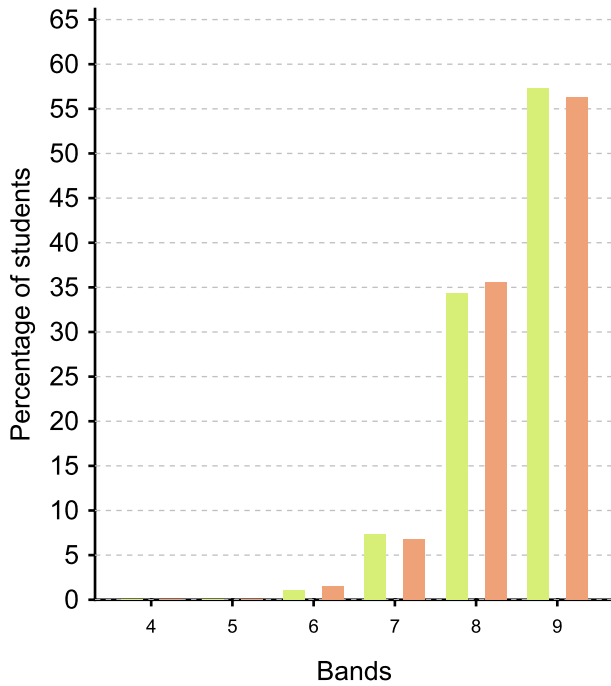
In 2016 96.1% of Year 7 students placed in the top 2 bands of reading with 78.1% achieving Band 9. Student representation in the top 2 bands was significantly higher than across the State. When compared to other selective high schools, MHS had 13.3% more Year 7 students achieving Band 9 for reading.

Year 7 Writing

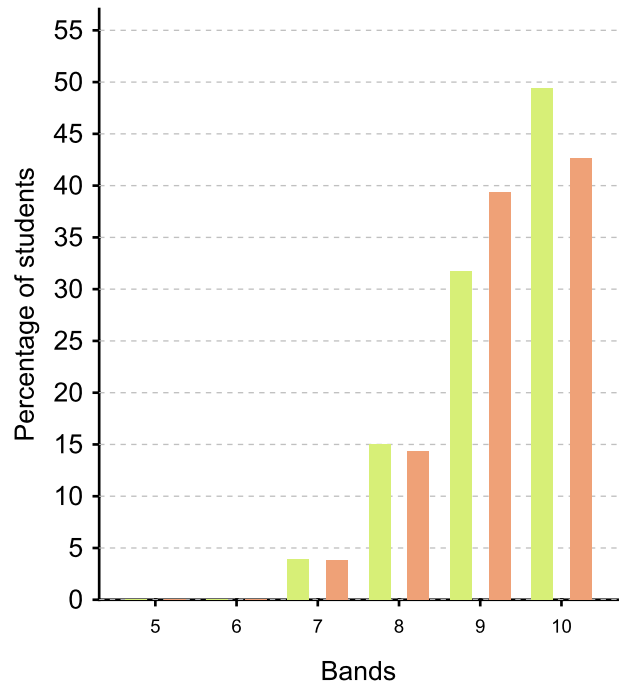
61.2% of Year 7 students achieved results in the top 2 bands of writing with 23% in Band 9 and 38.2% in Band 8. Results for this group were significantly higher than across the State.



Percentage in bands:
Year 7 Spelling



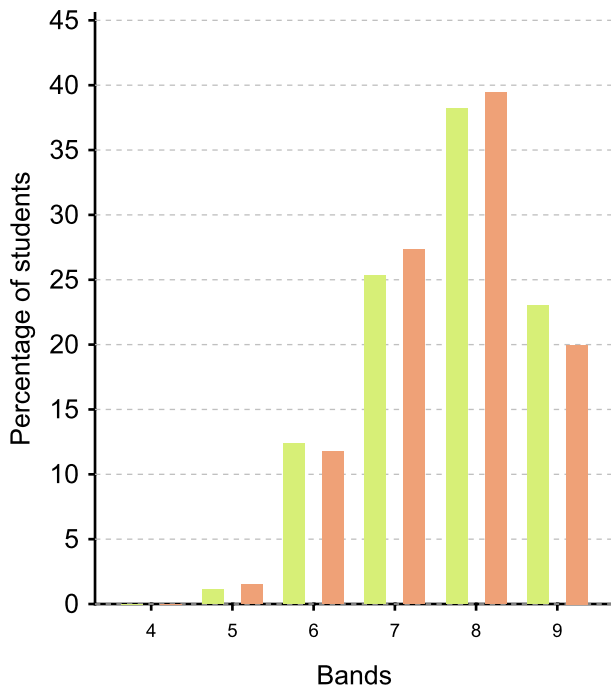
Percentage in bands:
Year 9 Grammar & Punctuation



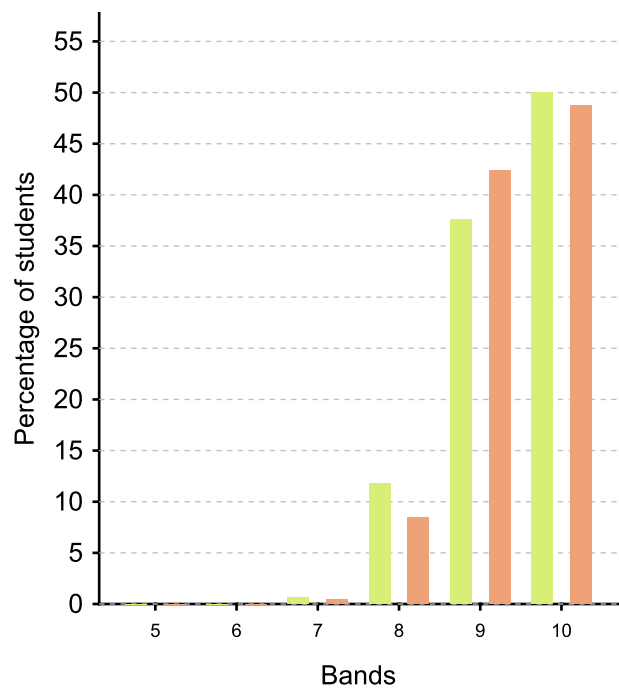
Percentage in Bands
School Average 2014-2016

Percentage in Bands
School Average 2014-2016

Percentage in bands:
Year 7 Writing



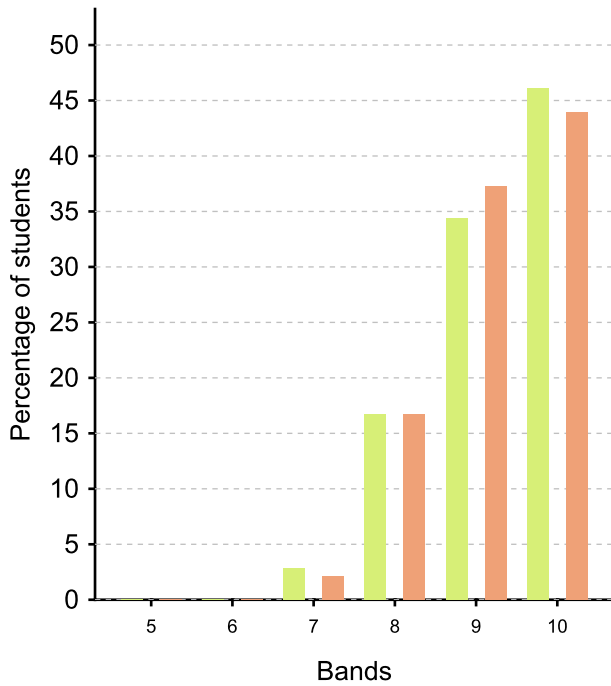
Percentage in bands:
Year 9 Reading



Percentage in Bands
School Average 2014-2016

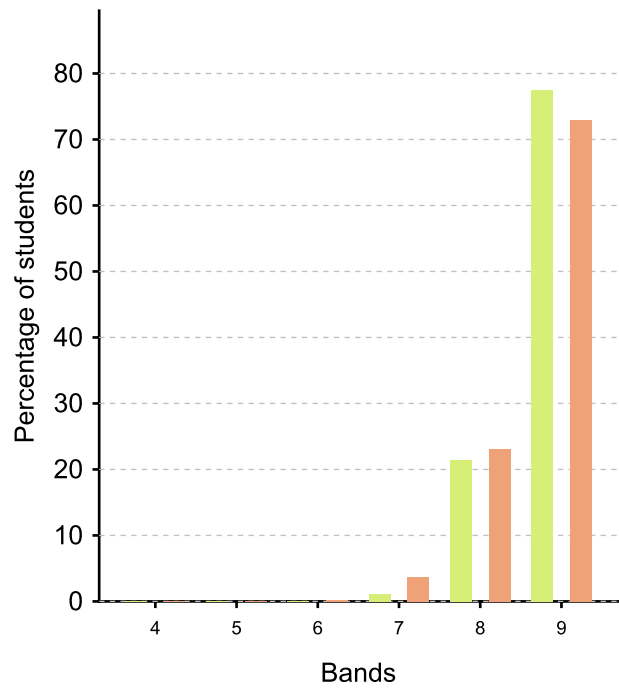
Percentage in Bands
School Average 2014-2016

Percentage in bands:
Year 9 Spelling



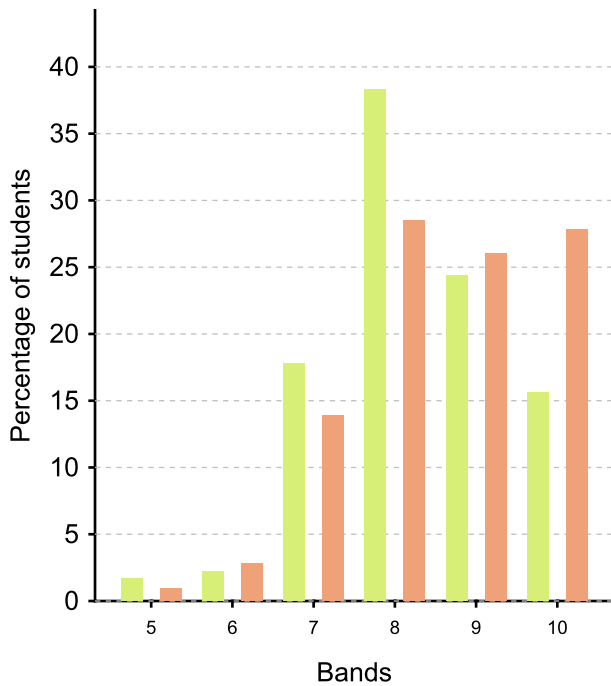
Percentage in Bands
School Average 2014-2016

Percentage in bands:
Year 7 Numeracy



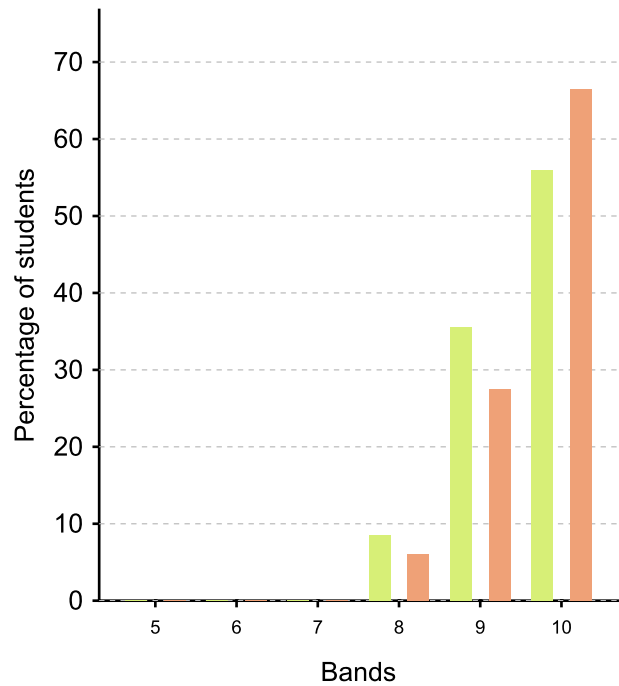
Percentage in Bands
School Average 2014-2016

Percentage in bands:
Year 9 Writing



Percentage in Bands
School Average 2014-2016

Percentage in bands:
Year 9 Numeracy



Percentage in Bands
School Average 2014-2016

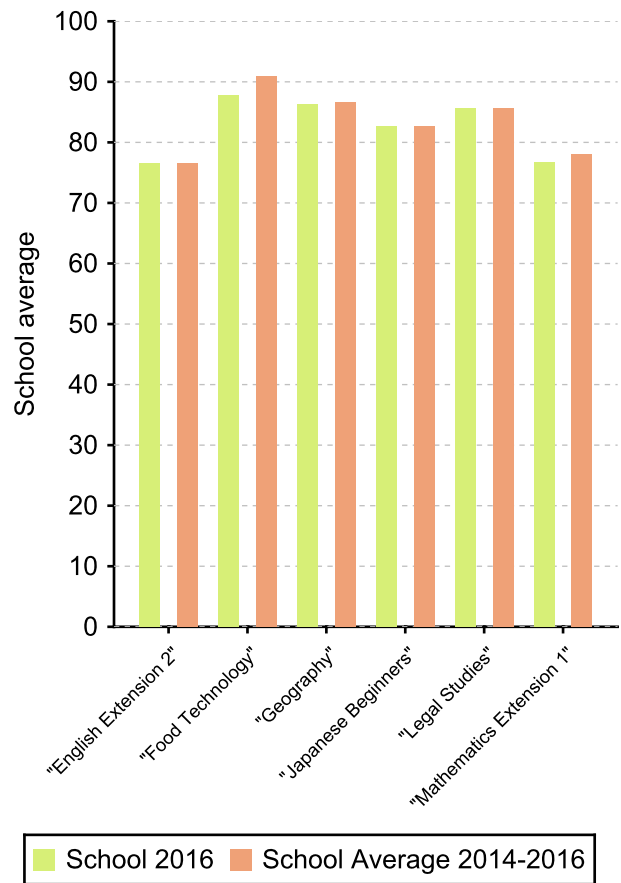
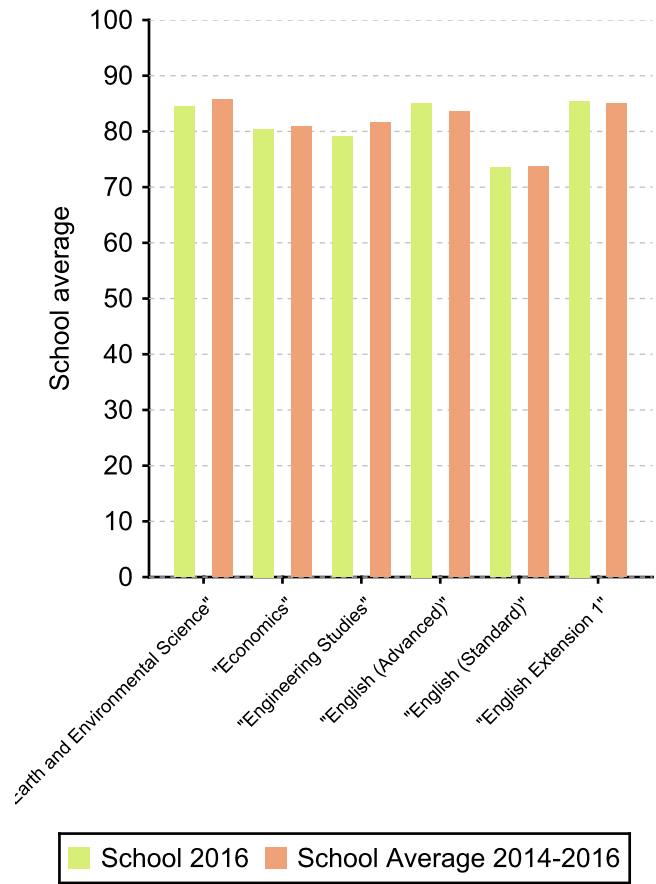
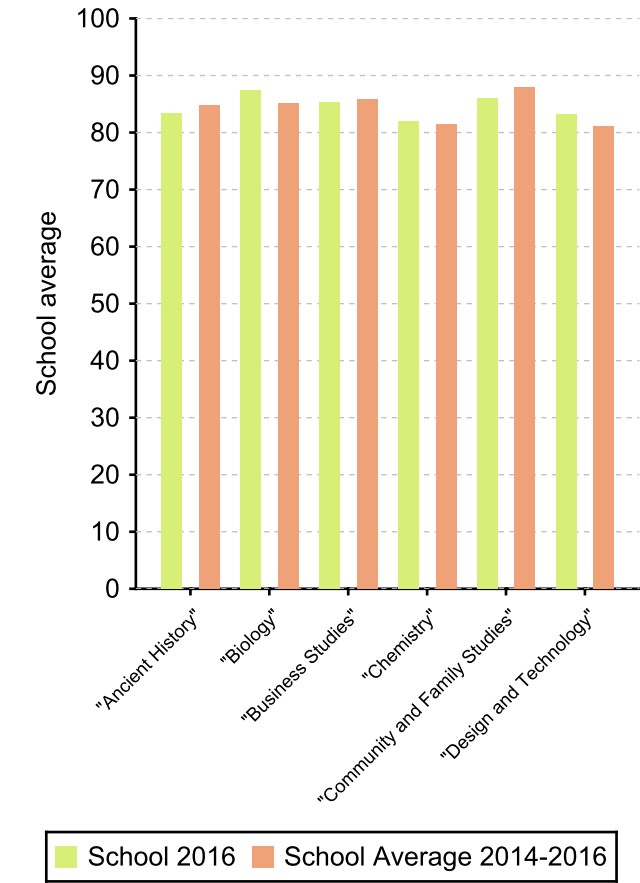
In Year 9 Numeracy 91.5% of Year 9 students achieved results in the top 2 bands of numeracy, with 100% of students achieving a Band 8 or above. Results for this group were comparable with other selective schools in the State and significantly above the All Schools State average. 51.4% of students demonstrated greater than, or equal to, expected growth.

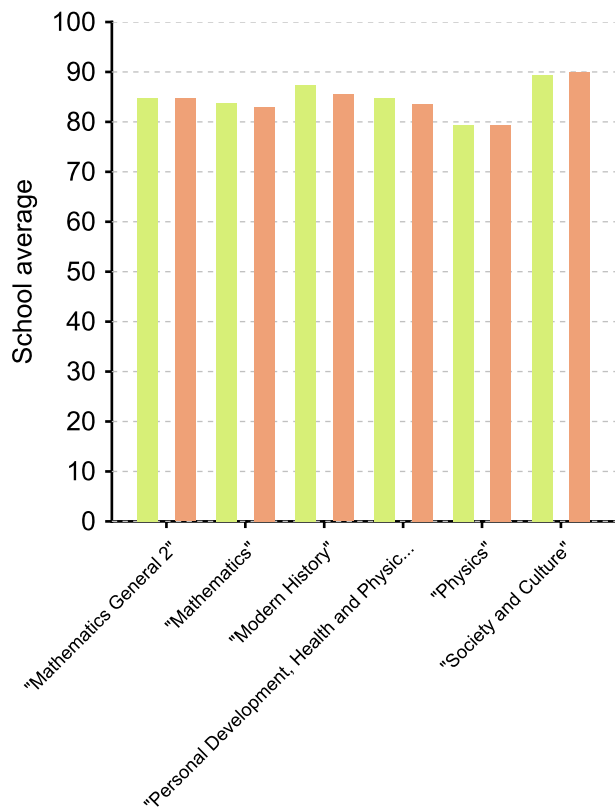
In Year 7 Numeracy 98.8% of Year 7 students achieved results in the top 2 bands of numeracy, with 100% of students achieving in the top 3 bands. When compared with other selective schools MHS had 3.8 % more students achieving in Band 8 or above.

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.

Higher School Certificate (HSC)

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

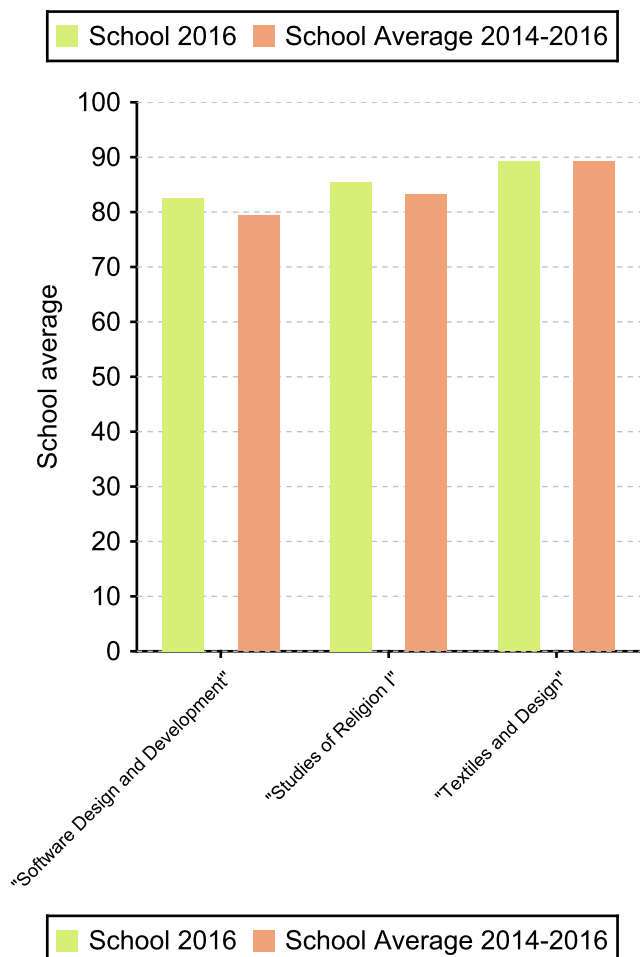




were placed on the top achievers list, earning a state ranking in their respective courses. Imogen Lewis achieved the state rank of 4th in English Advanced 2 unit, Amy Buckner placed 5th in Food Technology 2 unit, Carson McGovern placed 5th in Indonesian Continuers 2 unit, Elena Pavlou-Watt was placed 8th in Society and Culture 2 unit, Owen Small placed 4th in Biology, Elizabeth Mee placed 7th in Biology and Brooke Donoghoe placed 17th in Biology 2 unit. Ethan Brown received a mark of 50 in Extension 1 Mathematics I unit and Aymon Wuolanne achieved 100 in Mathematics Extension 1 2 Unit. Adelaide Bragias' HSC major work in visual arts has been selected for Art Express. Zac Nickel, Harrison Callen and Brooke Farr were nominated for their music performances and Musicology HSC Viva Voces in Music respectively. Thomas Whitehead's Design and Technology major work was selected for inclusion in the Shape exhibition. The accelerated program continued to see students achieve in the highest bands supporting them to achieve excellent results throughout the continuation of their HSC program.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

In 2016 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below. Parents have reported anecdotally at P&C meetings, canteen days, school carnivals and special assemblies, high levels of satisfaction and positive responses to the shared partnership established at the school and the willingness to review practices to better meet the needs of all within the school. Community members and parents report that they feel comfortable in approaching the school with any concerns. Staff have expressed an increased sense of consultation and have been involved in decision making on student management processes, teaching and learning activities and whole school calendar including extra curricular activities. These matters enabled staff to participate in decision making and contribute to the direction of the school. In 2016 staff, students and parents had the opportunity to complete the Tell Them From Me surveys. Seven hundred and seventy-four students completed the Tell Them From Me survey. In relation to the state norms students at Merewether High School indicated a higher sense of belonging, positive friendships, attendance, positive behaviour and homework and study habits. They also indicated a higher than state norm in being appropriately challenged in class, the effort they put in to their studies, access to quality instruction, teacher student relationships, learning climate and expectations for success. Through the staff survey it was indicated that leadership, collaboration, learning culture, data informs practice, teaching strategies, technology, inclusive school and parent involvement the school is above state norms. Staff did indicate a need to continue to improve our access to technology in all areas of the school. In the parent survey, parents rated the school above state norms in parents feel welcome, parents are informed, parents support learning at home, the school supports learning, the school supports positive



Seventeen students were placed on the high achievers list receiving Band 6 results in at least ten units of study. Seven students achieved ATARs above 99 and Ryan Mitchison and Imogen Lewis were awarded joint dux of the 2016 cohort. Our overall results saw our 2016 cohort achieve 307 Band 6s and 503 Band 5s with value added data demonstrating positive movement for the majority of students. Seven students

behaviour, the school is a safe place for students and the school is inclusive. The data gathered from the Tell Them From Me survey completed by staff, students and parents will be used to inform our future planning.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

This year our Aboriginal students, along with their families, engaged in the formation of a comprehensive Personalised Learning Plan (PLP). Each PLP identified the student's learning goals and the strategies to assist them to achieve these targets. In response to the PLPs, a range of activities were implemented that involved our Aboriginal students, their families and members of local Aboriginal community. The school was an active member of the local Muloobinbah AECG, which provided the School with access to valuable contacts from which to plan, implement and evaluate Aboriginal cultural and educational programs. This included an opportunity for all students to learn more about Aboriginal Culture through an excursion to local landmarks significant to the Awabakal people who are the traditional custodians of the land in our local school area. Students visited Mt Sugarloaf, Nobby's beach and Glenrock Lagoon under the guidance of local Aboriginal man Dave Newham who shared his extensive cultural knowledge with the students and staff in attendance. Aboriginal students accessed subject specific tutoring for Stage 6 subjects including English, Mathematics and Sciences through Norta Norta funding. These programs were highly successful and resulted in an improvement in academic performance and an increase in the level of confidence for the Aboriginal students who utilised these learning opportunities. Students made significant contributions to the MHS formal NAIDOC Week Assembly, with Louise Abernethy, Ethan Floyd and Laura Fernando sharing their stories in response to this year's theme Songlines - The living narrative of our nation. The students and staff of Merewether High School will continue to strengthen our relationships with our Aboriginal families, the Muloobinbah AECG and the local Aboriginal community and we look forward to working together in 2017.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

The multicultural policies and programs within the school reflect our cultural diversity. The broad range of ethnic backgrounds within the school allows our students to experience, first-hand, a variety of cultures. This is further enhanced with the many local and international excursions, as well as student exchange programs, that are available for our students. Multicultural education is explicitly taught in all our classrooms and staff endeavour at all times to ensure our school is an anti-discrimination environment. Our anti-racism contact officer is available for any member of the school community that may have concerns related to issues of racism. In 2016 there were no reports of racism within the school.

Other school programs

Sport

Sport continues to play an essential role in the building of the culture of the school and plays an integral role in the reinforcement of positive attitudes and values within our student body. Our school has continued to experience a range of successes in sport across a number of teams and individual activities. The Sport program continues to be a pillar of our school structure and the program promotes actively our school values of respect and responsibility. This ongoing success can be attributed to the high participation rates of our students and the dedicated professionalism demonstrated by staff. Our weekly sports program is complemented by a variety of opportunities at Regional and State Level. Our school teams won Zone Championships in swimming, athletics and cross country for the nineteenth consecutive year. A total of one hundred and one students were selected to represent the Hunter Region and seven students went on to represent NSW. We had one student, Angela Williams in Netball awarded a NSWCHS Sporting Blue. The following students were winners of individual gold medals at NSWCHS state carnivals: Nic Sonntag – NSW CHS Swimming. Milly Stephenson – NSWCHS Athletics. Lachlan White – NSWCHS Sailing. Eleven students were awarded Hunter Region Sports Awards or Blues. MHS students were successful at state level by winning medals in swimming, cross country, athletics, sailing and rowing. School teams in Open Boys' Tennis, Under 16 Boys' Rugby, 12 x 50m Swimming Relay, Open Girls' Netball, Open Table Tennis and Open Boys' Water Polo were successful in winning Hunter Region Knockout Competitions. Angel Barber was the MHS Sportswoman of the Year. Nic Sonntag was the MHS Sportsman of the Year. Bailey Proud was the Junior Sportsperson of the Year. Casey Smith, Nic Sonntag, Angela Williams, Rachael Ward and Davis Harara were recognised for their overall achievement in being awarded a Merewether High School Sporting Blue in their chosen sport. Under 15 Boys' Water Polo team were crowned NSWCHS Champions.

The Arts

The Arts continue to thrive at MHS, supported by a talented and committed staff and community professionals, who make a significant contribution to the quality and depth of the Arts programs. The Arts provide opportunities for the creative side of the intellect to stimulate higher order thinking skills, which contribute to the overall intellectual development of Gifted and Talented students. The Merewether High School music ensembles comprise Concert Band, Jazz Band, Saxophone Quartet, Clarinet Quartet, Flute Quartet, Piano Trio, String Ensemble, Vocal Ensemble and Percussion Ensemble. All instrumental ensembles participated in the Hawkesbury Eisteddfod, with outstanding results for all groups, including first place for the Chamber Ensemble and second place for the Concert Band. The Concert Band and Jazz Ensemble participated in Bandfest, with the Concert Band winning first prize. The String Ensemble participated in the Lake

Macquarie Eisteddfod, winning first prize. All music ensembles performed at the Ensembles Concert, held at the school in Term 1. There were four nominations for Encore from the HSC Music 1 2016 class – two in musicology and two in performance. The Drama Ensemble was formed in 2016, with performances at the school level showcasing the talent and dedication of these students. The annual POSH concert held at Newcastle Conservatorium gave the community the opportunity to see Year 12 elective music students and Merewether High School ensembles perform at a very high level in a professional venue. Merewether High School students were very involved in Star Struck, with a range of roles including featured artists, choir, backing vocalists, orchestra, drama and dance. The Vocal Ensemble participated in the Secondary Choral Concert at Sydney Town Hall, performing the famous *Carmina Burana* with a symphony orchestra, the premiere of *Tribe* by Sally Whitwell and songs with Katie Noonan. A significant number of Merewether High School music students are members of Regional Music Ensembles - the Hunter Wind Ensemble and Hunter Singers. This representation has increased in recent years. Both these prestigious ensembles are now based at Merewether High School, along with the community group, Newcastle Strings. Music and drama excursions enhanced the learning experiences of students, including Matilda, OnStage, Encore and Sydney Symphony Meet the Music concerts at the Sydney Opera House. One HSC visual arts student from the 2016 class was nominated for Artexpress and this work was selected for exhibition in 2017. Art exhibitions were held including *The Merewether Portrait Prize*, the exhibition of Year 12's Body of Work and the *Junior CAPA Night*, highlighting the outstanding quality of 2D and 3D artworks produced by MHS visual arts students. These exhibitions showcased the depth of talent, development of skills and higher order thinking required to produce such quality work. Creative and Performing Arts excursions provided diverse opportunities for students and exposure to quality arts experiences, including the Biennale exhibition and Artexpress. Other excursions included Sculpture by the Sea and Year 8 Luna Park.

English

Student participation in a range of co-curricular initiatives continued in 2016 with considerable success. Student participation was supported through the commitment of staff to develop and extend students skills and knowledge in debating, public speaking and writing competitions. Students were provided with opportunities to participate in a range of external writing competitions throughout the year. A number of students entered the write4fun and What Matters competition. Jacob Gamble (Year 11) and Jessilyn Maher (Year 7) both had their writing entries shortlisted as a top thirty entry in the What Matters writing competition. There were a total of 3871 entries in this competition and only thirty entries were shortlisted and recognised as an outstanding entry. Merewether High School entered two teams in each of the three secondary competitions of the Premier's Debating Challenge, with outstanding successes in these state-wide competitions. In order to better accommodate the number of students interested in debating, debating squads were formed. This

allowed a larger proportion of students the opportunity to participate in workshops and interschool debates. As the competitions became more competitive, competition teams were chosen to represent MHS. Successes in debating throughout 2016 included: The Year 10 Debating Team competed in the Years 9 and 10 Premier's Debating Challenge State Final. This was the first time a Merewether High School Year 10 team had participated in a State Final. Three hundred and eighty-four teams from throughout NSW competed in this competition. Rosanna Gately, Lucy Witherdin, Harry Su and Callum Donnelly were the students who competed in the State Final. Our Year 7 and 8 Team won the Hunter/Central Coast Regional Final and were invited to attend the Years 7 and 8 Premiers Debating State Camp in Sydney. Of six hundred and forty-four teams that competed in this competition, only ten teams from throughout NSW were invited to attend the camp. At this camp our students participated in a range of debates and debating workshops with some of NSW's leading debating coaches and adjudicators. They also competed in the State Final Series for this competition, and after a series of rigorous debates, were eventually crowned State Champions!! Students who attended this camp were; George McNamara, Mackenzie Gilligan, Evina Yadav, Ella Simons and Aleeyah Clifford. This is an extraordinary achievement; one of which the school and the Hunter/Central Coast Region can be justifiably proud. Rosanna Gately in Year 10 was chosen to be a Hunter/Central Coast Team Representative to attend and debate at the Junior NSW State Debating Championships Camp in December. All students in our debating squads were offered the opportunity to participate in virtual incursions to watch a live stream of the State finals of both the Years 11/12 and 9/10 Premier's Debating Challenge. Involvement in Public Speaking competitions continued throughout 2016. Students participated in a range of competitions. Participants were selected based on their public speaking skills, commitment to the program and an expression of interest process that included a proposal for their topic. Evina Yadav of Year 8 represented Merewether High School at the UN Youth NSW Voice Public Speaking Competition State Final in Sydney. Arthy Mukunthan (Year 9), Teza Sankoorikal (Year 9) and Annabelle Miller (Year 7) were selected to represent at the State Semi-Final of this same competition. George McNamara (Year 7) and Samyuktha Sethumadhavan (Year 11) won the Junior and Senior Regional finals in the Rostrum Voice of Youth Public Speaking Competition. They both competed in the NSW Final at Sydney. Samyuktha Sethumadhavan also represented in the NSW Final of the Plain English Public Speaking competition in Sydney. Public speaking workshops were run fortnightly throughout Term 2 and 3 with a particular focus on improving the quality of prepared speeches through practice and feedback. A variety of participation based games were played and the sophistication of the students' performances was impressive and certainly improved, as a result. All students in Years 7 – 10 participated in the ICAS English Competition. In addition to this, all of Year 7 participated in the ICAS Spelling Competition and Years 7 and 8 participated in the English Writing Competition. A large proportion of students received Distinctions and High Distinctions in these competitions.

ICAS English

High Distinctions were achieved by twenty-one students, Neve Eardley, Nathaniel Girdler, Monet Murray, Genevieve Ball, Jackson Sullivan, Jonti Crisp, Hamish Douglas, Leah Dove, Aditya Enjeti, Jack Matthey, Harry Tregilgas, Matthew Blyth, Jye Hollier, Ned Keyte, Lachlan Russell, Kieran Simons, Callum Smith, Max Spencer-Karinen, Jackson Turton, Cameron Shaw-Carmody. One hundred and eighty-three students achieved Distinctions and three hundred and eleven students were awarded credit.

ICAS Spelling

High Distinctions were achieved by Laura Edwards, Monet Murray with twenty-five students achieving Distinction and a further seventy-two being awarded credit.

ICAS Writing

High Distinctions were achieved by seven students, Connor Beveridge, Monet Murray, Oscar Richards Flanagan, John Kim, Ella Simons, Zoe Davis, Eben Taylor. Seventy-nine students achieved Distinction and one hundred and thirty-seven students achieved credit.

Mathematics

The Mathematics Faculty runs and coordinates a series of exciting programs and competitions throughout the year to provide students with engaging, challenging and enjoyable learning opportunities. Students participated in both the Australian Mathematics Competition and The International Competition for Assessments in Schools with participant numbers reflecting increased interest and resulting in outstanding achievements in both the competitions. Merewether High School supports an Enrichment program for exceptional mathematicians. The structured Enrichment Program is designed to improve mathematical problem solving skills in gifted high-school students who display aptitude for mathematics beyond what is offered in the standard high school curriculum. Students benefit from exposure to problem solving techniques not traditionally offered. This year seven hundred and ten students from Merewether High School competed in the prestigious Australian Mathematics Competition with outstanding results. Merewether achieved three Prizes, fifteen High Distinctions, one hundred and twenty-three Distinctions, three hundred and twelve Credits. Martyn Cox (Year 8) received the Best in School award, as well as a prize certificate for excellence, a monetary prize and a lapel badge from the Australian Mathematics Trust. Martyn was further invited to participate in an enrichment workshop in Sydney. Sharvil Kesarwani (Year 9) and Griffin Suters (Year 7) both received a prize certificate for excellence, a monetary prize and a lapel badge. Due to their excellent results in this competition, all three students were invited to participate in the Australian Intermediate Mathematics Olympiad. Sharvil Kesarwani achieved a Gold Certificate in this Olympiad, an exceptional achievement for a talented mathematician. This year Merewether High competed in the ICAS mathematics

competition. Our students achieved results well above the state average. There were four hundred and three students that participated with twenty nine High Distinctions, one hundred and forty one Distinctions and one hundred and sixty three Credits. High Distinctions were awarded to Patrick Charters, Andrew Weerasinghe, George McNamara, Matthew Ross-Evans, Alexander Paterson, Lachlan Falley, Daniel Flood, Mevan Kulasekara, Alex Nicholson, Josh Rana, Zenden Grieves, Griffin Suter, Daniel Wall, Daniel Clarke, Flynn Starrett, Cooper Janzen, Myra Paleologos, Zane Butterworth, Cas Masia, James Punch, Luca Borserio, Luke Kypri, Sharvil Kesarwani, William Lucas, Jason Zhang, Luke Nepia, Katherine Edwards, Harry Su and Tom Su. The Mathematics Challenge for Young Australians is an elite level mathematics program that encourages and fosters talented young Australian mathematicians, recognising their achievements nationally and providing support that will enable them to reach their own levels of excellence. Students enter this challenge to work on specific topics and submit major work. Two students competed at the Junior level and seven students at the intermediate level. Three students were awarded a Distinction and five students achieved a Credit. Further to the Mathematics Challenge, students participate in the enrichment stage program. In the Euler Series for junior students, George McNamara was awarded a credit. This Series comprises elementary number theory, geometry, pigeonhole principle, elementary counting techniques and miscellaneous challenge problems. The Noether Series consists of material on problem solving, algebra and number theory. It is designed for students in the top 5 to 10 per cent of Year 9 who have previously participated in the program through an earlier series. At this level, Sharvil Kesarwani received a High Distinction, one student achieved a Distinction and four students achieved a Credit. Sharvil Kesarwani was invited to participate in the 2016 AMOC Mathematics School of Excellence in the Senior division. Thirty mathematicians from across Australia are invited with the principal purpose of the School being to help identify and develop the skills of students who may become members of the Australian Team to compete at the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 12-23 July 2017. The six member Olympiad team will be selected in April 2017.

Science

Students continued to excel in school and extra curricula Science programs in 2016. Maya St-Jean represented Merewether High School at the National Youth Science Forum in January 2016. Georgia Cook, Adrienne Hanslow, Ari Mintoff and Emma Nickel were NSW State Finalists at the Australian Brain Bee Challenge. In the UNSW Science Competition, thirty-two students achieved a High Distinction, one hundred and eighty-six students achieved a Distinction and three hundred and forty-three students achieved a Credit. High Distinctions were achieved by: Cooper Janzen, Daniel Jaeger, Zenden Grieves, Griffin Suters, Jacob Hughes, Alexander Paterson, Aidan Knipe, Logan O'Reilly, Mia Nash, Charlie Hawke, Luke Kypri, Dharam Arora, Christopher Vallance, Angus Atkinson, Mitch Robinson, Joshua Bywater, Ronack Jain, Sharvil

Kesarwani, William Lucas, Anna Moscato, Cooper Porter-Kay, Kate Edwards, Bailey Handford, Jye Hollier, Charles Lott, Luke Nepia, Harry Su, Michael Trout, Jazmyn Wood, Alex Yan, Jason Zhang and Cameron Shaw-Carmody. In the 2016 VALID test all Year 8 students undertake, 85.3% of students achieved in Band 5 and Band 6 which was 7.1% higher than the achievement level of all other selective schools.

Social Science Faculty

The faculty celebrated many areas of student success in 2016. In the Australian Geography Competition Kate Edwards, Eben Taylor, Toby Burgess and Wilson McTaggart achieved in the top 1% out of sixty-five thousand student entries across Australia. In the University of New South Wales Business Studies Competition six students, Alicia Wainwright, Hailin Zhao, Justine Bull, Paul Rodgers, Eamonn Garvey and Aymon Wuolanne won prizes for exceptional scores. Rizina Yadav, Fia Sankoorikal and Lucy Witherdin came second in the National Canberra MUNA competition sponsored by the Newcastle Enterprise Rotary Club. In the Mock Trial Competition, the Merewether High School team won all local rounds progressing to the second knock out round. In the Geography Teachers Association Competition, Merewether High School students Imogen Lewis, Rachael Ward and Maddison Rarity won a number of awards including the Arthur Phillip Senior Fieldwork Award.

PDHPE

Students participated in 7 min fitness development activities as part of all practical Physical Education and PASS lessons. This addition to their regular program was informed by the data collected through our involvement in the University of Newcastle's ATLAS and NEAT research programs conducted during 2015. Students in Year 7 developed water safety knowledge and skills during the annual intensive Swim, Save, Survive aquatics program. Year 10 PASS students presented the program, enhancing their skills in leadership, instruction and organisation as well as strengthening peer mentor relationships with students in Year 7. Students engaged in opportunities to increase their daily level of physical activity through participation in lunchtime Futsal and Basketball sporting competitions. Students also contributed through their participation to raising awareness of Diabetes and further supported this area through charitable donations collected as a component of these lunchtime sporting events. Students in Years 10 and 11 successfully completed the St John Ambulance Provide First Aid training course, providing them with a WH&S recognised qualification in this area. Students studying Physical Activity and Sports Studies in Years 9 and 10 were provided with a sporting and cultural excursion to New Zealand during the October holiday break.

TAS

Accelerated Design and Technology student Thomas Whitehead had his Major Design project nominated for the HSC "Shape" exhibition of outstanding HSC major works. Fifteen Year 9 Engineering students were

involved in the University of Newcastle Science and Engineering Challenge Day, mentoring Year 6 students. Year 9 Engineering students were also involved in the Science and Engineering Challenge at Newcastle University. Year 7 and 8 teams competed in the Regional Robocup Competition. One Year 7 student – Daniel Flood, competed in the National final. Students from Stage 4 and 5 competed in the Regional F1 competition. Girls from Stage 4 and 5 were involved in a seminar conducted by UON Engineering and Built Environment Faculty to promote women in Engineering. Year 8 elective Food Technology students hosted parents and friends at several high tea functions throughout the year with a menu they planned, prepared and served themselves. Year 10 Food Technology held "pop-up" food stalls at lunch time to support their unit on food trends.

Languages

Our students enjoyed cultural experiences and were provided with the opportunity to increase their exposure to, and use of, other languages. Students from Japan's Keishin High School were welcomed as part of a cultural exchange program, with further exchange programs supporting students from France and Germany. Students from Japan, France, Germany and Northern Bali also spent time at Merewether High School. Students studying Indonesian have established connections with students of SMPN13 Bandung High in Jakarta to exchange language and cultural information. Staff members received a grant from Sydney University to develop language teaching software applications. Students attended regional cultural days and engaged in community language activities such as the French Film Festival, Cooking experiences, celebrating festivals from France, Germany, Indonesia and Japan and visiting Asian music group, the Rhythm Hunters Overseas tours continue to flourish as an opportunity for students to experience language and cultural emersion. Students worked with the local, Bali Hearts and Hands Group to establish links with SMA Negeri N Bali Mandara - Sampoerna Academy. Students entered their work in regional and state foreign language film competitions.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

ICAS Computing competitions were embraced by one hundred and ninety students from Year 7 through to Year 10 with a total of three High Distinctions, thirty-nine Distinctions and eighty-one Credits being achieved. High Distinction was awarded to Griffin Mitchell, Sarah Hayes and Angus Atkinson. Information Software and Technology students planned, scripted and assembled multimedia segments for internet broadcast and developed hologram displays using Adobe Premiere. IT club students entered the University of Newcastle digital sparks competition with a hologram project and VR style display. Students in the "Water Project" group are currently engaged in the process of collaboratively developing a mobile phone application that addresses environmental concerns in remote and coastal communities. Student work in Raspberry Pi sandpit programming with portable low cost computing, was further developed with group and individual projects including wirelessly controlled

irrigation and watering systems and Information Kiosks. Merewether High School in house game development has taken a leap forward with a sophisticated game engine Unity being widely adopted by Years 8 and 9 IST students. The school continued implementation of the current Technology Plan in conjunction with the BYOD program which has received wide acceptance across all years. Students now access the internet and DoE domain through a wide variety of tablets and notebooks. This expanded access is having a significant impact on teaching and learning strategies across all curriculum areas. The management of remaining DER laptops has been absorbed into the schools existing IT resources along with the BYOD program. Nine new sixty-five and seventy-five-inch touch panels have been installed in computing rooms, classrooms and the Independent Learning Centre as the next step in display technology becomes available. A substantial upgrade was completed of computers across designated computer labs, staffrooms and the senior study. Printers were also upgraded throughout the school with additional upgrades being carried out to data backup systems and storage capacity. Major network upgrades were initiated as part of the ET4L program, all work has been undertaken and the convergence of domains is now complete. A new sound system and associated management hardware was installed in the Learning Centre. Lesson presentation utilising a range of media links between Smartboards, Touch panels and mobile computing devices have continued to be adopted by an increasing number of staff.

Student Wellbeing

In 2016 the Student Wellbeing program included the Guidance Program in Years 7 and 8, Brainstorm Productions in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10, Peer Support in Year 7 with Year 10 leaders and Elevate Study Skills Program for Years 10, 11 and 12. Following a survey of students a Student to Student mentor program was introduced in 2016. Feedback from students involved in the program indicated that the program provided a positive and supportive environment for students academically, socially and emotionally. In the 2016 Peer Support Program thirty-five Year 10 students led all Year 7 students through a skills based, experiential learning program that empowers young people to support each other. It provides students with a supportive learning environment in which to develop the skills, understandings, attitudes and strategies to improve their mental, social and emotional wellbeing by developing key skills in resilience, assertiveness, decision making, problem solving and leadership. As a result of feedback from 2015, student leaders were provided with pre and post briefings during the delivery of the program which, through anecdotal surveys, improved the delivery of the program. A large number of Year 9s expressed an interest in being a leader in 2017, with the whole year group being trained and from there Peer Leaders selected. These students began the connection process through involvement in the Year 7 2017 Challenge Day and Orientation Day. Two new modules from the Peer Support Foundation were utilised to develop the program in 2016.

Teaching and Learning

The aim of the academic enrichment course in Stage 5 is to academically challenge and prepare students for accelerated learning by engaging students in critical enquiry and project based learning. Semester 1 involved group research projects, based around the theme of, how can we make the world a better place? Semester 2 had students developing and presenting their own independent project. The range of projects was extensive with thirty-five outstanding student works, being chosen for the Expo. The Expo was a quality learning display open to the whole school and the wider school community. In 2016 the program was further developed with the launch of the Year 8 IBL Challenge Day, where Year 9 students were leaders for groups of students in a range of problem solving challenges. Survey results from this day indicated the activities were both challenging and interesting and that the day was a positive introduction to IBL for 2017.

Humanities

Merewether High School students excelled in the area of Humanities in 2016. The Society and Culture Association of Australia recognised Adelaide Bragias with a High Distinction for her Personal Interest Project HSC assessment. Eleanor Pavlou-Watt was also recognised for her outstanding Personal Interest Project in addition to her state ranking of 8th overall. In the National History Challenge Essay Writing Competition Wilson McTaggart came first in the state in Year 10. With a number of additional students also recognised for their outstanding writing skills in this competition. Fifty-Two students received a Band 6 result in the Humanities subjects in 2016 with each HSC class having at least 25% of students receive a Band 6 result. The Australian History Competition also saw our students achieve great success with over 70% of entrants achieving a distinction or high distinction. Jacob Gamble was awarded the Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship and participated in a group trip to the battlefields of the Western Front.