

# Birrong Public School

## Annual Report



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## Introduction

The Annual Report for **2017** is provided to the community of **Birrong Public School** as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

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

Jodi Devine

Principal

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## School background

### School vision statement

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

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

### School context

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

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

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

# Self-assessment and school achievement

## Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

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

Self-assessment involved teachers reflecting on the School Excellence Framework across the three domains and referencing various sources of evidence to determine if our school was Delivering, Sustaining and Growing or Excelling in each element. Sources of evidence included student performance data, Tell Them From Me surveys, attendance data, ESL scales, PLAN data, SMART data, Instructional Rounds data and findings, teacher performance and development plans (PDPs), PBL data, minutes of meetings, Teacher Accreditation, student participation in SRC, School Plan milestones, staff meetings, P&C meetings, school newsletters, policies and systems of compliance.

Throughout 2017 there was a continued focus within the **Learning** domain on the elements of **Learning Culture** and **Wellbeing**. The Positive Behaviour for Learning(PBL) policy was reviewed and updated with renewed staff commitment towards consistent delivery of the framework. Our whole school approach to wellbeing through the continued participation of all students in the Lifeskills program and effective attendance monitoring by all teachers ensured students had opportunities to connect, succeed and thrive. Evidence collected indicates we are **Sustaining and Growing** in **Learning Culture** and **Wellbeing**.

Within the **Teaching** domain, the school continued to focus on the **Collaborative Practice** and the **Learning and Development** elements. Teachers collaborated to improve teaching and learning, provided and received constructive feedback through formal and informal observations and participated in Instructional Rounds. Formal QTSS (Quality Teaching Successful Student) mentoring and coaching support was also implemented across K–6. Evidence collected indicates we are **Sustaining and Growing** in the area of **Collaborative Practice**.

Teachers identified their own professional learning needs and participated in professional learning communities (PLCs) in the areas of formative assessment, feedback, setting challenging learning tasks and Learning Intentions and Success Criteria (LISC). Teachers reflected on student data and research to improve their teaching practice. Evidence collected indicates we are now **Sustaining and Growing** for **Learning and Development**.

In the **Leading** domain the school focused on the element of **School Planning, Assessment and Reporting**. With an increased understanding of, and broad support for the School Plan, our strategic directions and our milestones have enabled us to self-assess our progress. Evidence collected indicates we have moved from Delivering to **Sustaining and Growing** for **School Planning, Assessment and Reporting**.

Our self-assessment process has assisted with the development of the new School Plan which will ultimately lead to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-excellence-and-accountability/sef-evidence-guide>

## Strategic Direction 1

### Extending Lifelong Critical Learners

#### Purpose

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

#### Overall summary of progress

In 2017 teachers took part in creative and critical thinking professional learning to strengthen the implementation of inquiry focused learning across the school. Stage groups planned and implemented Project Based Learning that promoted students to collaborate and be critical when problem solving and taking part in real life tasks. The school executive and aspiring leaders analysed ACARA's matrix for implementing critical and creative thinking and identified what made a successful task. Stage teams developed programs aimed at achieving high standards. During the planning stage, ACARA's matrix was used to assist with the development of high quality and challenging tasks. These programs saw students become highly engaged as they took on different roles and responsibilities that demanded them to think creatively and critically. After implementing programs, executive and aspiring leaders scored the lessons against ACARA's matrix and provided valuable feedback to move professional learning forward. These lessons were shared at a professional learning network of neighbouring schools to celebrate and promote critical and creative thinking.

In Semester 2, a Professional Learning Community (PLC) was established for teachers to improve their implementation and knowledge of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria (LISC). Teachers met fortnightly to examine professional readings and share successes and challenges with using LISC in their teaching. Teachers in this PLC established a common understanding of how to use LISC to make learning visible and empower students to become independent learners. To support the implementation of LISC across the school, executive modelled lessons during QTSS time. Mentoring was used to assist teachers to embed LISC into lessons. In collaborative planning sessions, stage teams included LISC when creating teaching programs.

#### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Teaching programs contain effective feedback and formative assessment processes across all Key Learning Areas.	QTSS funding for mentoring and teacher release.	Each Stage leader and an aspiring leader implemented a series of creative and critical thinking lessons.  Stage teams reviewed the successes and challenges in implementing critical and creative thinking using their knowledge of the matrix and the lessons taught in Semester 2.
100% of all teaching staff incorporate quality assessment and feedback in daily practice.	QTSS funding for mentoring and teacher release.	Teachers have an improved understanding of how to write LISC and utilise it in lessons.  Staff now discuss and readily collaborate to form quality LISCs.

#### Next Steps

- Stage teams to continue to use ACARA's matrix when planning units of work and lessons to ensure students are developing their ability to engage with critical and creative thinking.
- PLC for LISC to share knowledge with colleagues to improve and develop understanding of LISC.
- Setting challenging tasks in Mathematics that are differentiated and support new learning.
- All teachers to continue to implement LISC and formative assessment strategies in 2018.

## Strategic Direction 2

### Developing Quality Educators and Leaders

#### Purpose

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

#### Overall summary of progress

During 2017 Birrong Public School received additional Quality Teaching Successful Students (QTSS) funding. This enabled our school to introduce a teacher mentoring and coaching timetable where each Assistant Principal worked with teachers to support their individual professional learning needs to improve teaching and learning practices.

Teachers were also surveyed to determine their area of interest for professional learning. Areas included Learning Intentions Success Criteria (LISC), Formative Assessment, Feedback, and Setting Challenging Learning Tasks. Teachers collaboratively worked within PLCs to reflect on current research and apply new learning to everyday teaching practice. Within each of the PLCs, teachers were able to discuss their practice, reflect on what was going well or what needed to improve, support each other with their professional development and share their expertise. This culminated in all staff presenting learning through a staff sharing session that led to a greater understanding by all teachers of the connections between the four focus areas.

Through the work with our RALBee (Regents Park, Auburn, Lidcombe and Birrong Public Schools) community of schools, all staff attended a combined School Development Day (SDD) presentation and workshop with Dr Kyle Shaw Senior Lecturer Education – University of Newcastle (Australia). The focus of this day was to develop teacher understanding and increase capacity to implement Creative and Critical Learning utilising the ACARA Creative and Critical Thinking Learning Continuum.

This was followed up with all leaders and aspiring leaders developing quality Creative and Critical Thinking learning tasks which were scored against the Learning Design Activity Rubrics.

#### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Teachers are actively engaged in planning their own professional development to improve their performance aligned with the school's needs.	PL funds to support teacher participation.  Most of the learning occurred outside of school time.	Teachers actively share learning from targeted professional development with others. There is a particular focus on improved teaching methods in Literacy and Numeracy.
Increased number of teachers performing the role of mentor at Birrong PS and across the RALBee CoS.	PL funds.	Each stage had at least one aspiring leader who supported the Stage supervisor. The aspiring leaders and Stage supervisors presented to the wider community of schools – RALBee for creative and critical thinking.

#### Next Steps

- 2018 will see the introduction of the Spirals of Inquiry framework where teachers will collaborate, use data to inform, plan and implement teaching practices to improve student progress.
- All staff will again work with Dr Kylie Shaw in the area of Creative and Critical thinking to ensure it becomes embedded practice so students have greater opportunity to engage in authentic collaborative, real world tasks when learning.

## Strategic Direction 3

### Fostering Supportive and Collaborative Partnerships

#### Purpose

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

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

#### Overall summary of progress

In 2017 the Lifeskills program continued for all stages to help students develop positive values and learn strategies to help resolve conflict. Teachers were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and whether it should be continued in 2018. The outcome of that feedback determined that the program would continue for all students next year, but the program content will be differentiated to better suit the needs of each stage.

Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) was further consolidated through a weekly focus which was updated in all classrooms by Student Representative Council (SRC) representatives. The installation of outdoor furniture – accessible to all students, provided greater opportunity for students to play board games or complete quiet activities at lunchtime. The Playground Pals program continued this year with senior students monitoring and supporting K–2 students in the playground. Stage 3 Peer Support leaders effectively led weekly lessons to groups of K–5 students which helped develop student networks beyond the classroom. Some classes developed informal buddy reading programs to further enhance connections.

The RALBee community of schools network focused on developing critical and creative thinking in class programs. A combined staff development day in Term 2 introduced teachers to ways critical and creative thinking could be developed to improve student engagement in learning. TPL meetings were held throughout the year for leaders and aspiring leaders to further develop their teaching skills, and share successes and critical and creative thinking programs taught in each school.

Birrong Public School Parents and Citizens actively supported all school events throughout the year. Their major focus included a successful Spring Fair that raised funds to support programs in the school. The P&C was also successful in obtaining a grant to improve the side playground for students.

#### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
100% of students and staff actively involved in networks beyond the classroom.	Human resources – staff and student groups.	Students actively participated in the Peer Support program and leadership groups including prefects, house leaders and library monitors.
75% of parents indicate increased understanding of how student learning develops.		This continues to be a work in progress for the 2018–2020 plan as it was not achieved in 2017.

#### Next Steps

- Parent consultation meetings to commence focused on improving school/community partnerships.
- Parent consultation meetings to occur to develop a shared vision and strategic directions for the School Plan 2018–2020.

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
<b>Aboriginal background loading</b>	Socio-economic background equity funds were utilised to support the school's work in this area as we did not have specific loading funds. The school did not have any Aboriginal students in 2017.	<p>Our relationship with the Bankstown Aboriginal Educational Consultative Group (AECG) was strengthened resulting in the Birrong PS / AECG Partnership Agreement being signed, presented and displayed in our foyer.</p> <p>All staff engaged in a School Development Day session to promote NAIDOC week and implemented new learning to their students promoting Aboriginal culture, perspectives and histories.</p>
<b>English language proficiency</b>	\$18445 flexible funding.	In 2017, initial and ongoing assessments were conducted in order to understand the students' English language proficiency. Specialist EAL/D (English as an Additional Language or Dialect) teachers continued to provide support to cater for the specific needs of students from a language background other than English (LBOTE). The aim of the EAL/D support was to develop EAL/D students' English language competence across the curriculum so that they would be able to achieve equitable educational outcomes. The EAL/D support was delivered in a variety of ways to meet the diverse needs of students at different stages of learning English. Consistent growth and development of EAL/D students in English language proficiency were evidenced throughout the year.
<b>Low level adjustment for disability</b>	\$73134 flexible funding.	0.2 additional employment of Learning and Support Teacher (LaST) to monitor/support students at risk and relieve the Learning Support Team (LST) coordinator. Students requiring support for transition were identified and supported by LST members. Teachers released to develop Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and consult parents in the process.
<b>Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)</b>	\$42153 as the assigned budget. Not all funds were expended due to the great difficulty in finding appropriate casual teachers for relief.	<p>A QTSS timetable was developed for Executives to mentor and coach teachers in their areas of need.</p> <p>LISC and formative assessment strategies were modelled by executive in demonstration lessons and were evident in classrooms during supervisor observations.</p> <p>Teachers were observed by peers and received feedback on their progress to achieving their PDP goals and identifying future goals.</p> <p>LISC was evident in programming documents and observed in classrooms with the result being students understanding learning intentions and the criteria to succeed in a given lesson.</p> <p>Data was used to inform teaching and to direct future planning and reporting.</p>

<b>Socio-economic background</b>	\$354,473 flexible funding.	All students received literacy and numeracy programs that were responsive to their needs. Employment of 3 School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs) supported identified students in the classrooms. Employment of additional School Administration Officer (SAO) for school based assessment data entry and wellbeing program maintenance. A speech pathologist was employed for one day per week to work with teachers in K-6 classrooms. Lifeskills, a wellbeing program, was utilised again in 2017 to support students K-6 in the development of their social and emotional resilience and self-regulation skills.
<b>Support for beginning teachers</b>	\$21576 as the assigned budget. This was utilised on a needs basis.	Anecdotal evidence, observations and mentor feedback indicates teachers are demonstrating an increased capacity to implement quality teaching programs and manage classroom routines.
<b>Targeted student support for refugees and new arrivals</b>	\$682 targeted funding. Socio-economic background equity funds were also utilised to support the school's work in this area.	<p>Targeted student support for refugees and new arrivals was provided to enable students to settle successfully into school.</p> <p>Staff participated in two professional learning sessions on the <i>STARS (Safety, Trust, Attachment, Responsibility and Skills) framework</i> to better support students from refugee backgrounds.</p> <p>The New Arrivals Program was implemented for the newly arrived students to develop their English language proficiency so they could better access the full curriculum.</p>

## Student information

### Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2014	2015	2016	2017
Boys	245	261	276	285
Girls	314	300	283	288

Enrolment numbers have steadily increased over the last few years. There isn't a significant gap between the number of girls and boys as seen in previous years.

### Student attendance profile

School				
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
K	93.6	94.6	95.2	92.5
1	96.2	93.3	95.2	95
2	95.5	91.6	94	95.4
3	97.1	93.6	95.2	94.2
4	96.7	94.8	94.4	95.2
5	96.1	93.2	94.9	94.7
6	96.5	94.8	95.3	95.3
All Years	96	93.7	94.9	94.6
State DoE				
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
K	95.2	94.4	94.4	94.4
1	94.7	93.8	93.9	93.8
2	94.9	94	94.1	94
3	95	94.1	94.2	94.1
4	94.9	94	93.9	93.9
5	94.8	94	93.9	93.8
6	94.2	93.5	93.4	93.3
All Years	94.8	94	94	93.9

### Management of non-attendance

Rolls are consistently monitored and marked with class teachers seeking absence notes and contacting parents if students have an unexplained absence.

Student attendance is discussed regularly at fortnightly team meetings with identified student attendance concerns followed up by Executive through the Lateness and Attendance Monitoring Program or referral to the HSLO.

The school receives and processes over 100 applications for extended leave travel per year.

Class attendance rates are monitored and celebrated with an Attendance Champions' trophy and certificate awarded to the class with the highest attendance rate each fortnight.

## Workforce information

### Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	4
Head Teacher(s)	0
Classroom Teacher(s)	20.32
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0.74
Learning & Support Teacher(s)	1.4
Teacher Librarian	1
Teacher of ESL	1.2
School Counsellor	1
School Administration & Support Staff	4.06
Other Positions	0

\*Full Time Equivalent

### Teacher qualifications

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

### Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	56

### Professional learning and teacher accreditation

During 2017 teachers seeking accreditation participated in three school based professional learning workshops to develop their understanding and ability to meet the required criteria.

Workshop 1 examined the requirements of NESA to achieve accreditation and the processes that need to be followed in forming and submitting an application. Teachers looked at the Australian Standards for

teachers and discussed the different types of evidence that could be used to meet each standard.

Workshop 2 focused on the types of evidence teachers are intending to use for their accreditation including how to structure an annotation.

Workshop 3 enabled teachers to share their annotations and give and receive feedback to each other to refine and improve their annotations.

Teachers have been working with their supervisors to develop their applications.

Two teachers were successful in achieving Accreditation by the end of 2017 while two other teachers advised that they are working on their Accreditation Reports and plan to submit these in 2018.

## Financial information (for schools fully deployed to SAP/SALM)

### Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017.

	2017 <b>Actual</b> (\$)
<b>Opening Balance</b>	350,349
<b>Revenue</b>	4,994,776
Appropriation	4,824,012
Sale of Goods and Services	15,039
Grants and Contributions	151,024
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	4,700
<b>Expenses</b>	-4,921,859
Recurrent Expenses	-4,921,859
Employee Related	-4,278,641
Operating Expenses	-643,217
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
<b>SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR</b>	72,917
<b>Balance Carried Forward</b>	423,267

The school's financial management processes include the development of a school budget with staff input, strategic financial management practices and monthly monitoring and tracking of expenditure which is

overseen by the Principal with the support of the School Administration Manager. In 2017 consultative support from a Business Manager was obtained periodically to ensure the school met the Department's financial policy requirements.

The school intends to spend its available funds on projects that will continue into 2018.

- Installation of playground items for the Side Playground Project as part of a joint initiative with the P&C.
- Replacement of classroom air conditioners.
- Replacement of classroom interactive whiteboards.
- Contribution to the school's maintenance projects.
- Development of a flexible learning space and parent consultation spaces.

### Financial summary equity funding

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

	2017 <b>Actual</b> (\$)
<b>Base Total</b>	3,656,754
Base Per Capita	85,430
Base Location	0
Other Base	3,571,324
<b>Equity Total</b>	710,144
Equity Aboriginal	0
Equity Socio economic	354,473
Equity Language	140,333
Equity Disability	215,338
<b>Targeted Total</b>	101,901
<b>Other Total</b>	261,532
<b>Grand Total</b>	4,730,332

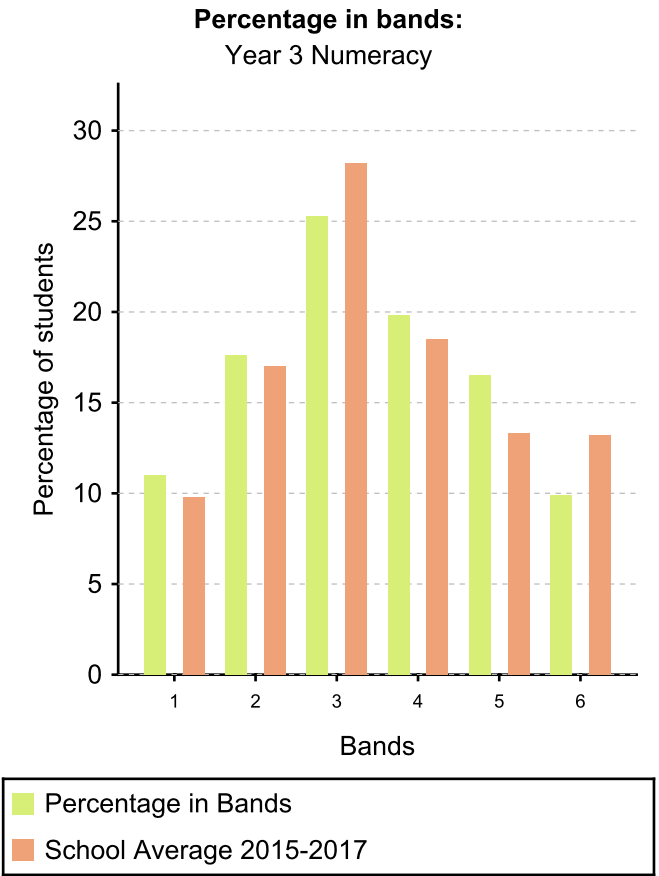
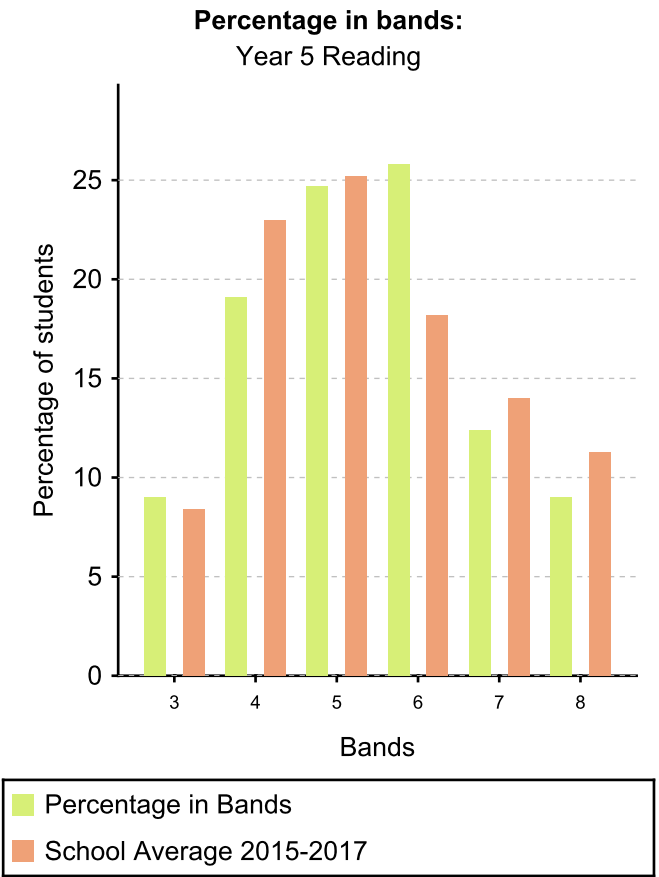
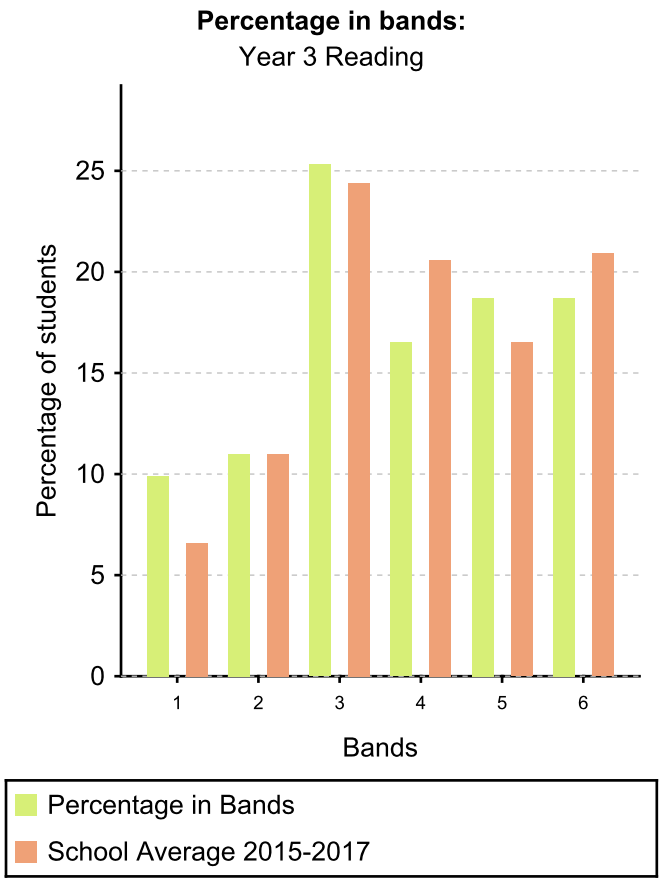
Figures presented in this report may be subject to rounding so may not reconcile exactly with the bottom line totals, which are calculated without any rounding.

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.

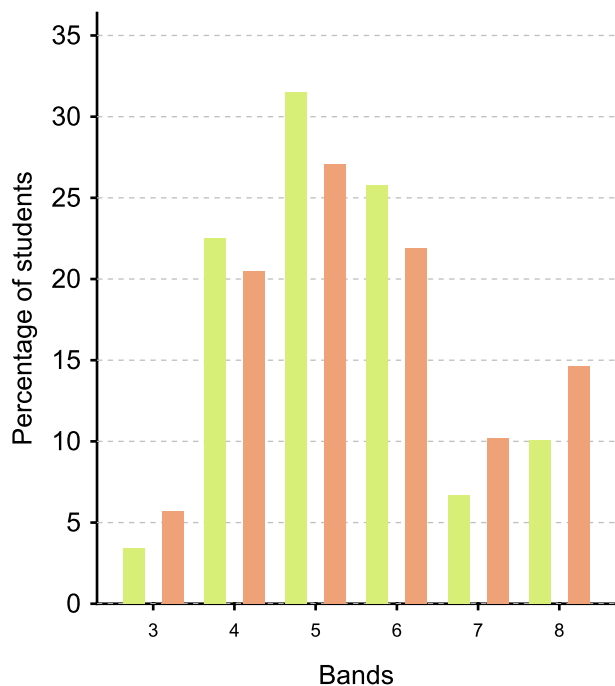
# School performance

## 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 5 Numeracy



The My School website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing. Go to <http://www.myschool.edu.au> to access the school data.

## Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

The Tell Them From Me surveys were completed by the majority of students in Years 4 to 6, by all teachers working at Birrong Public School, and a small number of parents.

The surveys measure 20 indicators based on most recent research on school and classroom effectiveness and the results help to inform future decision-making and planning in regards to improving our school for our students, teachers and community.

Some of the data included:

- Students feel accepted and valued by their peers and by others at their school with 78% of students in this school indicating they had a high sense of belonging.
- 94% of our students believe that education will benefit them personally and economically, and will have a strong bearing on their future.

Parents feel welcome at Birrong Public School.

- 6.4 out of 10 parents feel welcome when they visit the school.
- 7.3 out of 10 parents feel they can easily speak to their child's teacher.
- 6.0 out of 10 parents feel they can easily speak to the school Principal.

- 7.0 out of 10 parents feel that the Administrative staff are helpful when they have a question or problem.

These results are taken into account during our new planning cycle.

The Teacher Survey reports on some of the drivers of student learning.

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

Teacher feedback is similar to previous years and is also being used to inform planning.

Survey responses are positive and consistent when compared to previous years with our parent satisfaction results.

## Policy requirements

### Aboriginal education

Aboriginal Education has been supported in 2017 by a team of our teachers including a Learner Leader participating in Aboriginal Education Committee meetings. We had a representative attend all Bankstown AECG meetings and this year we signed the Partnership Agreement between Bankstown AECG and Birrong Public School. The Partnership Agreement is a document developed by the NSW AECG in consultation with the Department of Education. It outlines how both parties will work together to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal students.

Birrong Public School observed NAIDOC week by engaging students in Aboriginal language activities to promote the theme 'Our Languages Matter'. As part of NAIDOC week, classes ran an Aboriginal Art competition. The winning artworks were used to personalise our AECG Partnership Agreement which is now proudly on display in our front school foyer.

### Multicultural and anti-racism education

Birrong Public School embraces the cultural diversity of the school community and provides valuable opportunities for an inclusive multicultural education. Tolerance and respect for all cultures is embedded in all parts of the curriculum and school environment. The school is developing its History and Geography scope and sequences. These will ensure students' perspectives are broadened and cultural diversity is further embraced and fostered within our school.

There is a trained Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) who is the first contact in dealing with any allegations of racism. Reported instances of racist behaviour are rare and are always dealt with in accordance to the policy and procedures of the Department of Education. The ARCO role also involves promoting the values of

respect for all races and cultures and our school rules of showing respect, being safe and being a learner help to further support these values.

Our school endeavours to engage full participation from parents and community members from diverse backgrounds. The school newsletter is now available online in different languages to better inform our school community. Interpreters assist with interviews for parents who have a language background other than English.

## Other school programs

### Choir

Fourteen students were selected from auditions to perform in the combined school choir for Our Spectacular. This year we further engaged boys in the choir by having a boys only audition session resulting in the highest number of male participants ever. All students participated in 3 full day rehearsals at Granville South Performing Arts High School in Terms 2 and 3 and successfully learned and performed 12 songs with the theme 'Around the World'.

The Spectacular Choir sang songs in Swahili, Moari and Nigerian to celebrate cultural diversity and embrace our global community.

The Spectacular Choir was involved in Birrong's first Creative and Performing Arts Showcase. The students sang four songs from the Our Spectacular concert as well as 3 numbers from The Lion King to complement the Drama Club's performance. This event attracted an audience of over one hundred parents and community members.

### Dance Troupe

Twenty-seven students from Years 3–6 participated in Dance Troupe for Our Spectacular at the Sydney Opera House. The theme for the Spectacular was Around the World. Schools chose a different country and Birrong chose Russia. The students danced to *Moscow*, which was the song from the 1980 Olympics. The performance had Russian soldiers and a group of Babushka girls who entered the stage through two giant Babushka dolls. The audience enjoyed the acrobatics of the Russian soldiers and the soloists who performed the traditional Cossack dance.

The Dance Troupe also performed at the first Creative and Performing Arts Night in the school hall. The audience enjoyed being close to the performers and the students were excited to have another chance to perform in front of an audience.

### Premier's Reading Challenge (PRC)

This is our 14th year of participation in the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge where students are encouraged to read widely throughout the year. K–2 students attempted the Challenge and read up to 30 books. 118 students from Years 3–6 were successful in the Challenge by reading 20 books independently.

Three Year 6 students received a platinum award for successfully completing the PRC for seven years in a row, while 31 students received a gold award for completing the challenge for a total of four years.

### Debating

For the second consecutive year, Birrong Public School participated in a friendly debating competition for schools within our area. The debaters progressed to the final round of the competition following five rounds of debates. They managed to secure a win in the final round. Students worked consistently to develop their public speaking skills and demonstrated great improvement throughout the competition. They cooperated well as a team and developed personal organisational skills.

### Band

Birrong School Band was tutored by Mr Rae Forrester and had members from Years 3–6. All band members met with Mr Forrester for one session each week and practised their instruments at home. The band had two groups, the senior band and the training band.

Birrong School senior band joined the Mount Pritchard Public School band to compete at a regional Eisteddfod where they earned the highest award possible. The band also performed at school events throughout the year including Education Week, a PBL whole school assembly and the first Birrong Creative and Practical Arts night.

### Sport

Birrong Public School had a very exciting year in sporting events. The school was involved in all three district carnivals; swimming, cross country and athletics. We achieved the following results: 3rd at swimming, 8th at cross country and 13th at athletics.

Students also participated at regional level in all three carnivals and in district teams for a number of sports including basketball, netball, cricket and soccer. We had one student make the Sydney South West (SSW) cricket team.

Winter PSSA was very successful for the junior girls' soccer team, junior girls' netball team and senior girls' newcombe ball team winning their grand finals. The junior boys' newcombe ball team finished runners up.

Success was also achieved during Summer PSSA with both the junior girls' and boys' basketball teams, junior girls' cricket team and senior girls' basketball team winning their respective grand finals. The senior girls' cricket and junior boys' cricket teams were runners up.

The whole school participated in a gymnastics program for 8 sessions in Term 2 or 3. The Department of Education School Swimming and Water Safety program was held in Term 4 with 178 students participating from Years 2 to 6.