

Merewether Heights Public School

Annual Report



2017



4416

Introduction

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

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

S. Egginton

Principal

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School background

School vision statement

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

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

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

School context

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

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

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

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

In 2017 there are 340 students enrolled into 14 classes. The students are supported by 1 Principal, 3 Assistant Principals, 13.49 teaching staff and 2.922 administration staff.

Self-assessment and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This 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.

LEARNING:

- **Learning Culture**– Excelling
- **Wellbeing**– Excelling
- **Curriculum**– Sustaining & Growing
- **Assessment**– Sustaining & Growing
- **Reporting**– Sustaining & Growing
- **Student Performance Measures**– Sustaining & Growing

Our major focus in the domain of Learning was continuation of our journey around formative assessment practice, student achievement tracking using PLAN software and use of collegial planning days. This involved implementation of a suite of formative assessment strategies which were delivered during professional learning sessions, used in classroom practice and evaluated by teaching staff. To support this, Executive Staff attended training sessions based around the work of Dylan Wiliam and delivered the content to the rest of the staff. Collegial planning days continued to be a positive way for staff to complete stage-based programming, write quality assessment tasks and rubrics and participate in consistent teacher judgement sessions (CTJ).

TEACHING:

- **Effective Classroom Practice**– Sustaining & Growing
- **Data Skills and Use**– Delivering
- **Professional Standards**– Sustaining & Growing
- **Learning and Development**– Delivering

In the domain of Teaching, our efforts have focused on delivery of effective Professional Development that links to Professional Development Plans (PDP) and school strategic directions. Professional learning opportunities provided for staff promoted collegial conversations and collaborative teamwork by encouraging staff members to align their learning goals. This allowed professional learning to filter through teams of teachers and allowed them to compare effective classroom practice. The formation of a Professional Learning Team that collated staff requests for professional development ensured that staff goals were an educational priority and ensured equity of opportunity.

LEADING:

- **Educational Leadership**– Delivering
- **School Planning Implementation and Reporting**– Sustaining & Growing
- **School Resources**– Sustaining & Growing
- **Management Practices and Processes**– Delivering

The priority for the domain of Leading centered on staff and student wellbeing . Professional Learning covered the Child Wellbeing Framework and staff worked together to ensure our Wellbeing Scope and Sequence reflected best practice. Student individual leadership was encouraged by allowing the children to lead their own learning during the 'Genius Hour' session. This allowed students choose a passion project, research their topic and deliver the results to their peers. Wellbeing initiatives were led by the whole staff to ensure targeted programs addressed the needs of all students.

Our self-assessment process will assist the school to refine our school plan, leading 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

Quality Teaching

Purpose

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

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

Overall summary of progress

The Professional Development team met and coordinated goals set by teachers in their Performance and Development Plans (PDP). These goals were then used to drive the schedule for PD sessions. Teachers were encouraged to outsource any Professional Development they required that was above and beyond the offerings that the PD team could provide and many teachers applied for permission to attend additional external training.

Teachers became more aware of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers as they used these to form their PDP goals. Teachers ensured they addressed a range of standards when devising their goals and collaborated with colleagues and executive staff to ensure they selected the appropriate standard for each goal.

Staff continued to become adept at writing and managing their Performance and Development Plans (PDP). They were encouraged to familiarise themselves with the strategic directions of the school plan so tailored, relevant training could be provided. Clusters of staff coordinated their learning goals so they could support each other during new learning. This led to excellent collaborative practice and widened collegial connections across the staff.

Executive staff and office staff received training in the new Learning Management and Business Reform project (LMBR) and delivered elements of this training to the remainder of the staff. LMBR was initially used for roll marking and wellbeing but it was found to be problematic and cumbersome so the school purchased the Sentral system for these tasks. Staff received minimal training in the use of Sentral and it is anticipated that this training will continue into 2018.

Programming processes were reviewed by all staff and modifications were made to the expectations of classroom teacher programmes. Classroom teachers submitted their programs twice a term for supervisor review. Elements of differentiation and formative assessment practices were expected to be evident in all teacher programs. These were noted by stage supervisors and compliance or non-compliance was addressed by the principal.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
At least 95% of students will be at grade benchmarks indicated by PLAN data in literacy and numeracy.	\$3500.00	PLAN data collected from years K–6. Data was analysed to target teacher programming. Primary teachers identified difficulties differentiating between clusters and require further professional learning.
99% of Year 3 and Year 5 NAPLAN results will be at or above national means standards in all testing areas.	\$1500.00	NAPLAN data analysed to identify individual student needs and any trends appearing in the delivery of the curriculum. % average below National Minimum Standard across all testing areas: Year 3–2%; Year 5–2.6%. % average in the top two bands: Year 3–62%; Year 5– 35.8%
Quality teaching and learning programs are evidenced by targeted and evidence-based professional development	\$19701.00	All professional learning was targeted towards staff learning goals as identified in their Performance and Development Plans.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
practice across the staff using the Guskey Evaluation tool at Level 5.		Staff tracked their progress using the professional learning framework.

Next Steps

- Revise meeting frequency of PD team– more coordinated meetings required.
- Ensure staff receive copy of school plan and milestones so they can thoroughly familiarise themselves with document.
- Store PDP document on MyPL for ease of access
- Continue staff training in use of Sentral modules

Strategic Direction 2

Quality Learning Using a Differentiated Approach

Purpose

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

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

Overall summary of progress

Staff continued their learning journey around formative assessment practices. This learning was led by executive staff who attended a training course led by renowned educator, Dylan Wiliam. The school purchased a software kit to complement the staff professional learning and this provided additional information and a suite of formative assessment strategies. Strategies were taught and discussed during training sessions and teaching staff were encouraged to implement them into their teaching practice. After a period of time implementing the strategies, staff were able to feedback their experiences to their colleagues which led to effective collegial discourse, debate and possible modification of the strategies.

Classroom teachers continued to use PLAN software as an effective means of tracking student achievement and planning for future learning cycles. Experienced staff acted as mentors for this process and upskilled their colleagues to generate reports and learning plans for students. The use of PLAN was found most effective for years K–2 as primary staff reported there was less support within the program for the older grades. PLAN also provided a platform for discussion during stage planning days as teachers compared their students and jointly devised appropriate learning activities dependent on the student's PLAN results.

Professional Development sessions on new syllabus content continued to be delivered, including learning on the new History and Geography syllabus. Classroom teachers gained experience teaching the new History and Geography content as this had been exclusively delivered by the Release from Face to Face teacher and the librarian in the previous year. The RFF teacher and librarian provided essential support to staff as they were familiar with the content of the syllabus and were able to assist where needed.

Focus on Reading staff training was also delivered but it was decided that we had done all we could in the way of Professional Development and further training would need to be delivered by a qualified program deliverer. This training was sourced but the cost was deemed prohibitive for our school. The basic program training around the Super 6 comprehension skills was still used in some classrooms but additional training would be required to see it done throughout the school.

All teaching staff were provided with Stage Planning days each term. This enabled stage leaders to work with their team to plan units of learning, write assessment tasks and rubrics, plan excursions and participate in CTJ of student work samples. The use of these planning days ensured that teaching and learning opportunities were well-coordinated and appropriate to student learning needs. This provided consistency of expectations across the school. These days were also used to rigorously evaluate previous units of work which led to the provision of high quality learning experiences.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
100% of programs, assessment tasks and rubrics reflect current changes to pedagogy and curriculum.	\$2400.00	Planning days, stage meetings and staff mentoring were used to develop corporate programs, authentic assessment tasks and rubrics. Stage supervisors monitored individual programs and provided targeted assistance to teachers to ensure all programs reflected best practice.
Quality teaching and learning programs are evidenced by targeted and evidence-based professional development practice across the staff using the Guskey Evaluation Tool at Level	\$500.00	Staff and stage supervisors reviewed and reflected upon the Professional Development opportunities that they had accessed during the year. Many felt that the learning they had accessed was useful and current, but expressed desire for more.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
5.		Staff and stage supervisors reviewed and reflected upon the Professional Development opportunities that they had accessed during the year. Many felt that the learning they had accessed was useful and current, but expressed desire for more.

Next Steps

- Continue use of differentiation strategies based on formative assessment results and incorporate risk-taking behaviour into curriculum by encouraging students to attempt new learning without fear of failure.
- Provide staff training on implementation of PLAN 2 software
- Investigate and plan training on new literacy initiatives including 2–6 spelling program and regional writing program.
- Continue to provide Stage Planning days each term to allow collaborative planning.

Strategic Direction 3

Quality Learning Environment

Purpose

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

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

Overall summary of progress

Professional Learning on the Child Wellbeing Framework was delivered to staff and initiated the amendment of our wellbeing scope and sequence. All staff were consulted as to the content and teaching sequence of the new scope and sequence to ensure it met the needs of all students. Aspects of the new scope and sequence were communicated to the wider community through the school newsletter and the scope and sequence content was commenced immediately.

The 'Genius Hour' program was delivered across K–6 in varying ways. Younger students had a more structured approach to the program whilst the older grades encouraged wider freedom of choice. This program allowed students to determine their own learning for one session per week. They had to choose a 'passion project', research the project and then deliver the results to their peer group. This program provided a way for the students to take a leading role in their learning and differentiated the content of knowledge the class was exposed to. Teachers reported that the students showed great enthusiasm during the 'Genius Hour' program and the range of content covered was very interesting.

Teacher wellbeing was addressed during an after-school session attended by all staff. This session covered areas such as teacher stress, workload, collegial relationships and relaxation. This session was very well received by teaching staff and requests were made for more professional development in this area.

Some teachers continued to teach physical education based on the SCORES principles. This program seemed to lose some momentum during 2017 due to lack of equipment and leadership. Revisiting the SCORES program training may be needed to refresh teacher knowledge of the SCORES principles and the content of the training. Stocktake and reordering of equipment may also be necessary to ensure longevity of the initiative.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
100% of teachers are following the wellbeing scope and sequence plan.	\$1000.00	Scope and Sequence plan adopted following staff consultation. A 'Mindfulness' program planned and implemented to address the need to care for staff wellbeing. The Rock and Water program was implemented in Years 2 to 6. The You Can Do It program was supported by coordinated programmed classroom activities.
Students' fundamental movement skills assessments show a 30% improvement in skill levels.	\$1500.00 \$5300.00 (Sport in Schools)	A coordinated Fundamental Movements Skills program was developed and a program for implementation adopted. Assessment tasks were devised to measure the success of the programs.
Identifies high social needs students are showing a 20% reduction in Time Out visits.	\$14642.00 (Student Support) \$20000.00 (Student Welfare Worker)	Time-out has been renamed 'Planning Room'. 10% of the student population attend the Planning Room. This represented an increase in the number of incidents. There was an average of .25 students per school day.
80% of students are achieving their planned learning goals in Genius Hour activities.	\$2000.00	Students planned and researched their area of choice and presented their project to their peers.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
80% of students are achieving their planned learning goals in Genius Hour activities.		Evaluation showed a high level of student achievement and excitement. The program received very positive parent support.

Next Steps

- Review Genius Hour/Enrichment groups to determine content and way forward for 2018
- Source additional staff wellbeing opportunities
- Review SCORES program and order additional kits for SCORES fundamental moves lessons

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
Aboriginal background loading	\$2792.00	In 2017 we had six students identify as being Aboriginal. Key initiatives included the provision of Personalised Learning & Support Plans (PLSP), programming to include Aboriginal perspectives and regular committee meetings of the Aboriginal Education action team.
Low level adjustment for disability	\$69727.00	Two students received funded support from the School Learning Support Officers (SLSO). This support was coordinated by the school's Learning Support Team and was targeted to address the individual needs of the students. Professional mentoring guidance and support was provided by the Learning and Support Teacher (LAST) to all staff supporting these students. As an example of the progress achieved, student 'A' improved from reading level of 17 in December 2016 to a level 28 in December 2017.
Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)	0.253 staffing component	<p>This funding was used to provide opportunities for staff to view colleague's lessons, provide collaborative planning days for staff and to provide mentoring and support to staff that were establishing new programs within their classroom.</p> <p>Pre-observation collegial discussions were utilised to ensure PDP goals were evident in classroom practice. Funding was also used to support one teacher seeking accreditation at proficient level and this provided mentoring and evaluation opportunities.</p> <p>Executive staff were involved in data conversations with classroom teachers and were able to target quality intervention based on data analysis.</p>
Socio-economic background	\$7458.00	This funding was used to support students whose families were experiencing financial difficulty. Assistance was provided for excursions, fee relief and uniforms and ensured equitable access to resources.

Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2014	2015	2016	2017
Boys	174	169	175	194
Girls	160	165	165	156

Student attendance profile

School				
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
K	96.1	94.2	96.1	94.6
1	94.6	94.6	95.1	95.3
2	95.7	93.4	95	94.8
3	96.1	94.6	94.3	94.1
4	95	94.9	93.7	93.6
5	94	94.3	95.7	93.4
6	96.3	93.1	92.5	94.9
All Years	95.5	94.2	94.6	94.4
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

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	0
Assistant Principal(s)	3
Head Teacher(s)	0
Classroom Teacher(s)	12.44
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0
Learning & Support Teacher(s)	0.5
Teacher Librarian	0.8
Teacher of ESL	0
School Counsellor	0
School Administration & Support Staff	2.92
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	0

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Each year, the school is allocated money to finance Professional Development across the school. Our priorities for Professional Learning in 2017 have been aligned with the school plan and have targeted differentiation, formative assessment and staff and student wellbeing.

In 2017, quality professional learning sessions were delivered on:

- Performance development framework
- School excellence framework
- PLAN software
- English planning
- Writing Assessment
- Super Six comprehension strategies
- HSIE syllabus
- Observation and effective feedback
- Formative assessment
- Staff wellbeing techniques

- Anaphalaxis
- CPR
- Fire Safety
- First Aid
- WHS mandatory training

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

One classroom teacher gained her teacher accreditation and was supported by colleagues and executive staff to do so.

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

All teachers will become part of the 'Great Teaching:Inspired Learning' initiative from 2018 which will see every teacher responsible for maintaining professional standards and accreditation with NESA(formerly BOSTES).

	2017 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	234,445
Revenue	2,782,299
Appropriation	2,544,674
Sale of Goods and Services	22,096
Grants and Contributions	211,216
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	4,313
Expenses	-2,696,791
Recurrent Expenses	-2,682,932
Employee Related	-2,301,116
Operating Expenses	-381,817
Capital Expenses	-13,859
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	-13,859
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	85,508
Balance Carried Forward	319,953

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.

Financial summary equity funding

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

	2017 Actual (\$)
Base Total	2,314,851
Base Per Capita	51,961
Base Location	0
Other Base	2,262,890
Equity Total	80,748
Equity Aboriginal	2,792
Equity Socio economic	7,458
Equity Language	771
Equity Disability	69,727
Targeted Total	36,581
Other Total	26,927
Grand Total	2,459,108

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.

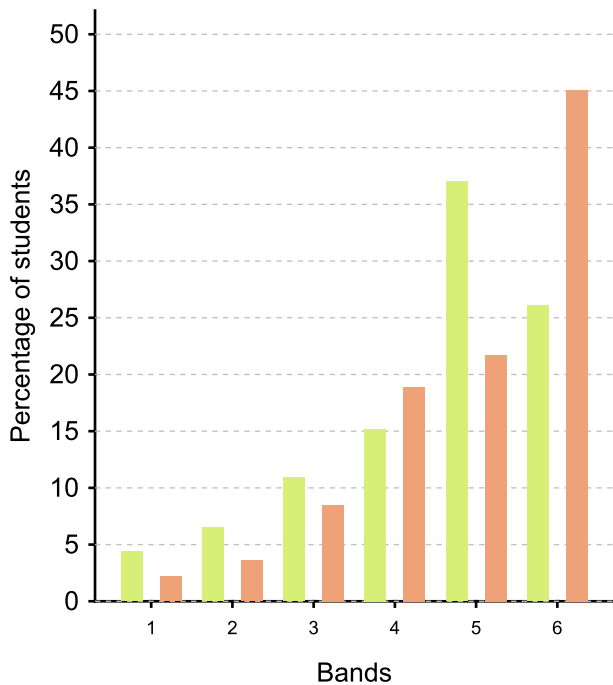
A full copy of the school's financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance

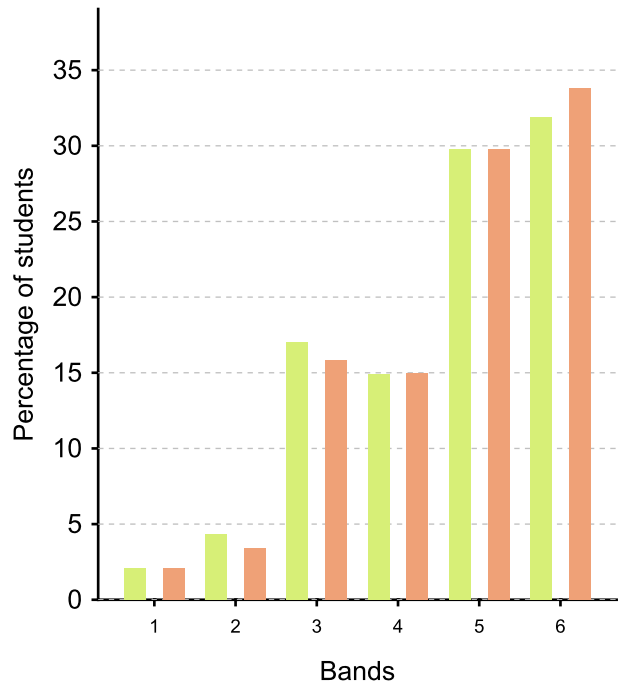
NAPLAN

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.

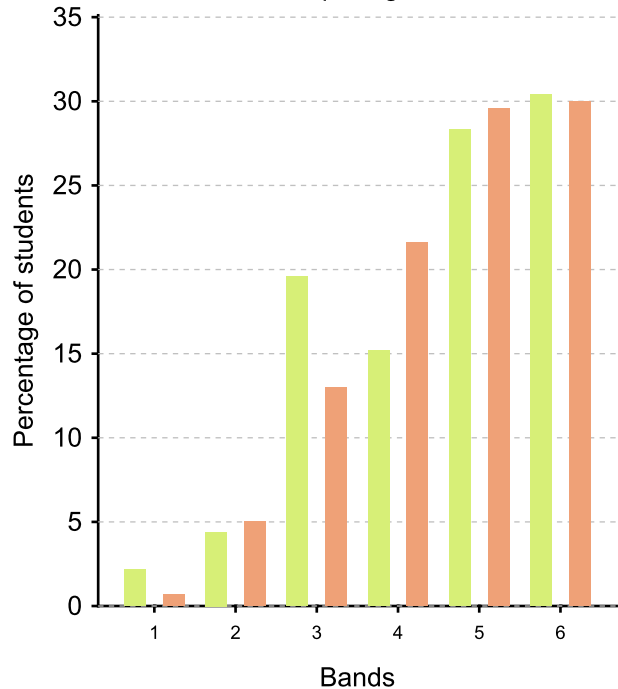
Percentage in bands:
Year 3 Grammar & Punctuation



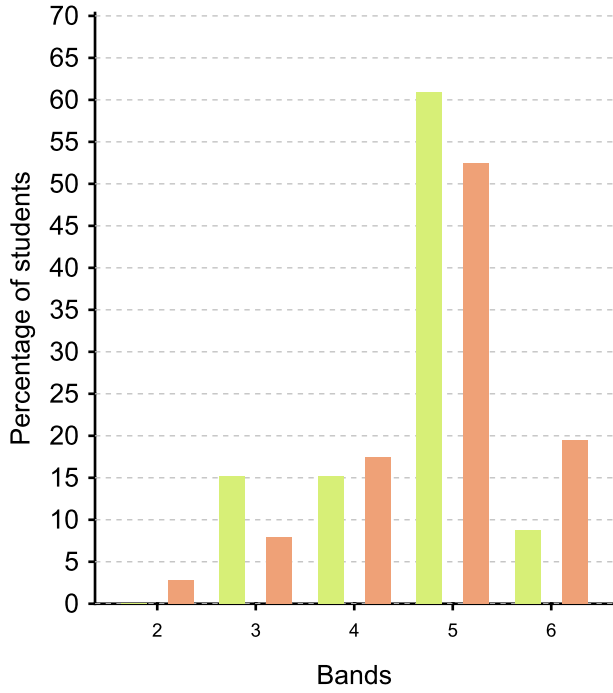
Percentage in bands:
Year 3 Reading



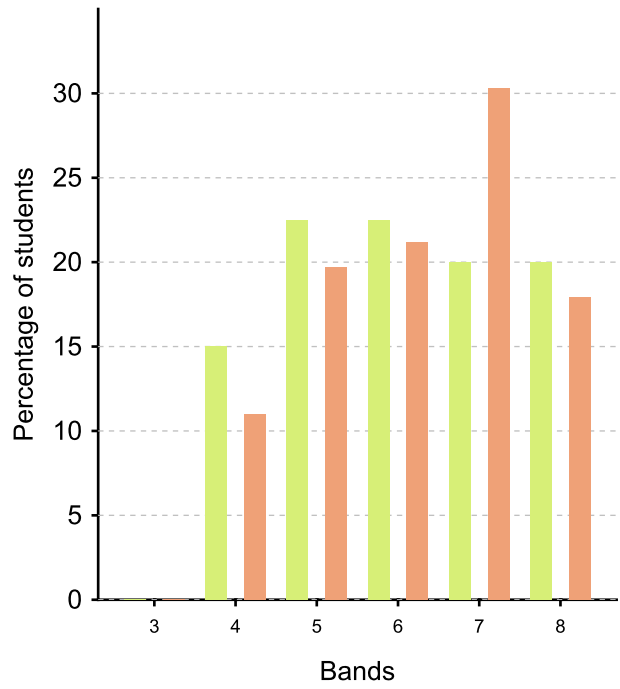
Percentage in bands:
Year 3 Spelling



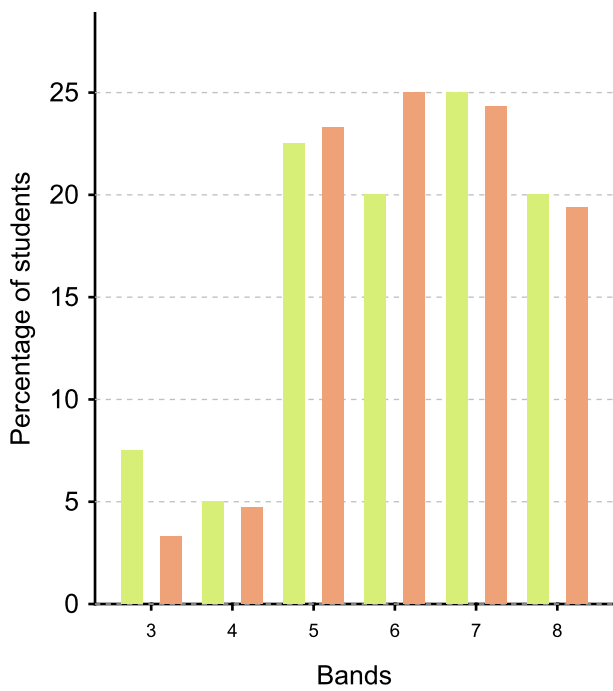
Percentage in bands:
Year 3 Writing



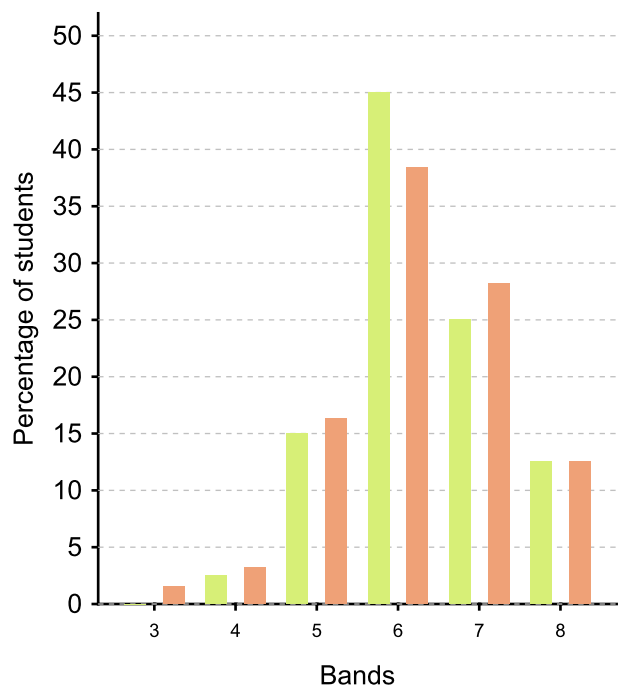
Percentage in bands:
Year 5 Reading



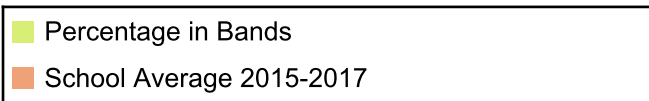
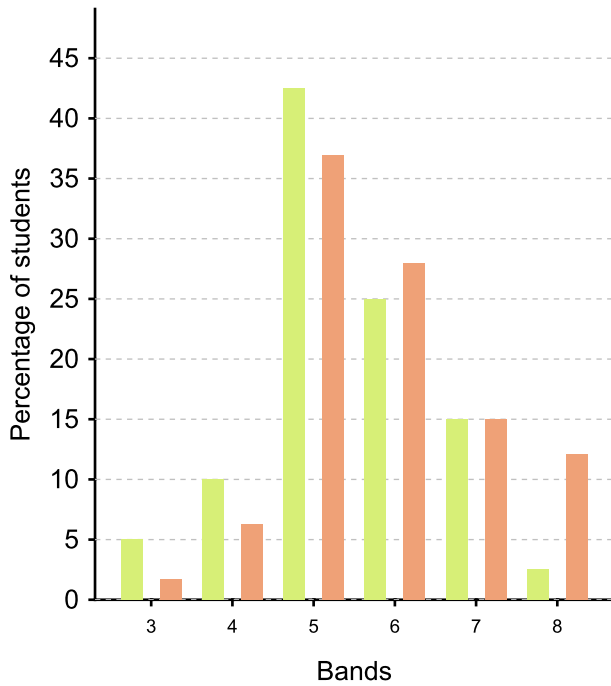
Percentage in bands:
Year 5 Grammar & Punctuation



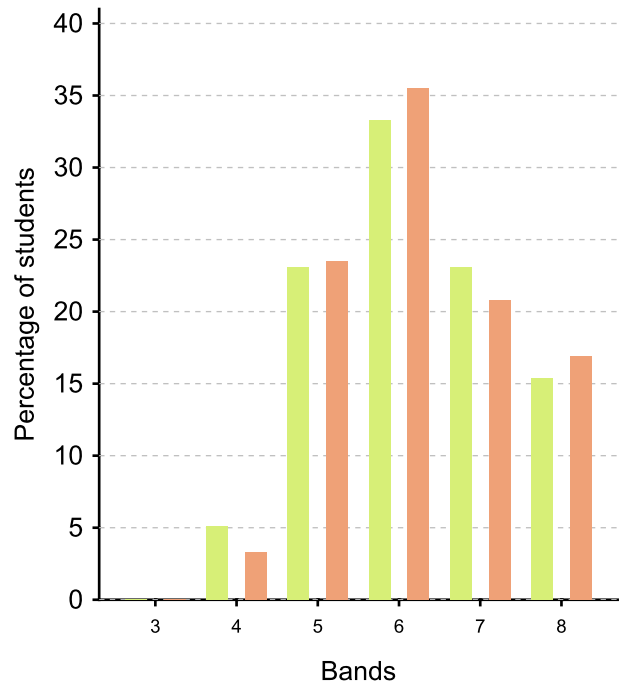
Percentage in bands:
Year 5 Spelling



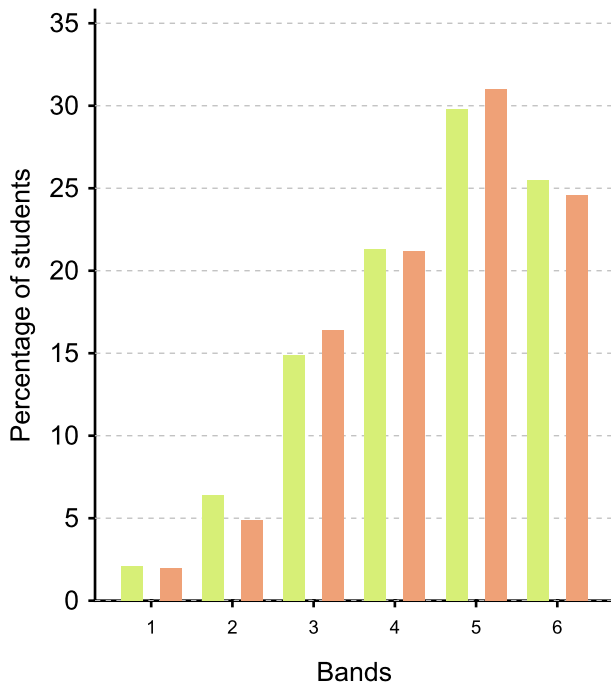
Percentage in bands:
Year 5 Writing



Percentage in bands:
Year 5 Numeracy



Percentage in bands:
Year 3 Numeracy



Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Parent/caregivers, students and staff were all provided with a survey during Term 4 of 2017.

Return rate:

Parent/Caregivers 52% of surveys returned

Staff 55% of surveys returned

Students 67% of surveys returned

Overall, the parent, staff and student survey was well received and returned very positive sentiments. The majority of survey respondents valued the nurturing teaching staff, kind and caring students and beautiful, natural school surroundings. A very strong positive element that came throughout the surveys was the very strong sense of community the school has and the need for this to be nurtured. This was such a strong feeling from the surveys that this will form part of our strategic direction in the next school plan. Overall 92% of parent surveys were positive about the school's operation.

Areas that parents sought clarification on included school communication, uniform concerns, maintenance issues and new areas of the curriculum. Some students expressed concern about grounds maintenance, lack of lunchtime sports equipment, homework expectations and lack of technology. Overall, 93% of students responded to the survey with positive comments about their experience at Merewether Heights Public School.

Staff were very positive on their survey responses but raised concern at the following issues; a need for more forward planning, STEM/STEAM focus required, communication issues and grounds maintenance. 95% of staff surveys relayed a positive sentiment to the school.

Findings from all of the surveys were collated and presented to the Merewether Heights Public School P & C. They were also used to drive consultation for the 2018–2020 school plan formation.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

- All students participated in NAIDOC celebrations which involved all students being invited to wear the colours of the Aboriginal flag and attend a NAIDOC performance by Sean Choolburra. At the performance, they were given the opportunity to participate in dance, stories, painting, fire creation and didgeridoo playing. They were also presented with a wonderful array of artefacts, from fishing nets to hunting shields.
- All students were given the opportunity to participate in a writing competition 3–6 and an art competition K–2 which showcased their understanding of important events.
- The Aboriginal Education Action Team which comprises of a representative teacher from each stage as well as other interested staff continued to meet throughout the year.
- Efforts were made to develop a partnership with our local AECG through staff attendance at local AECG meetings.
- Senior students led the whole school in an afternoon of traditional games.

Future goals for the next 12 months

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

Multicultural and anti-racism education

Multicultural perspectives were incorporated into all Key Learning Areas during the year. Connections to cultural diversity were also made on a class, grade and school level through artworks, speeches, multimedia presentations and writing activities. Merewether Heights Public School celebrated Harmony Day with special class activities, singing, interactive technology activities and a whole school assembly.