

Bullimbal School

Annual Report



2017



Introduction

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

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

Brett Pearson

Principal

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Message from the Principal

Although our students are faced with challenges on a daily basis, as a school community, we strive to create learning experiences which allow students to perform at their best as they move toward becoming independent citizens. Empowering students with a voice to communicate in all areas of their lives remains a central focus of our efforts. It is through autonomous communication that our students are able to fully participate in their learning and achieve excellence in their results, at school and in the wider community. As a staff member at Bullimbal School, it is an absolute privilege and honour to contribute to programs that enrich our students' lives.

Brett Pearson

Principal

Message from the school community

In November 2017, our P & C elected new office bearers for the up coming year. P & C had a very busy time hosting a Welcome back BBQ for new and returning families. We also held an Easter Raffle, Bunnings BBQ and stalls on Mother's and Father's Day, Christmas raffle and End of Year BBQ. With the proceeds of this fundraising, we were able to purchase a new stove and other equipment for the school community. I would like to thank the outgoing committee members for the wonderful job and funds raised to benefit the Bullimbal School community. Total funds in the account at the end of 2017 were, \$20 079.21.

Kerrie Tisdell

P & C President

School background

School vision statement

At Bullimbal School the staff believe that we are here to make a difference for our students by maximising their learning potential in an enriched learning environment.

Our supportive learning team enhances the quality of our students' lives through encouraging independence, achievement and excellence, as they become valued members of society.

The families and carers of our students will be supported and encouraged to actively contribute to their children's education demonstrating a commitment to lifelong learning.

School context

Bullimbal School is located in Tamworth. The student population draws from a wide area of Tamworth, Manilla, Nundle and Quirindi, with the majority of students travelling to and from school using the Assisted School Travel Program. The school provides quality education for students from Kindergarten to Year 12 with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities, including autism, physical disabilities, mental health, visual or hearing impairments. Currently there are 54 students across 8 classes.

The school was relocated in 2010, incorporating modern, specialised assistive technologies and state-of-the-art facilities including a heated indoor hydrotherapy pool, sensory garden, multi-sensory learning space and film studio. The school has a well-resourced and engaging playground environment including bike track, play equipment, sand pit, vegetable garden and a range of inclusive and purposeful learning spaces.

The school continues to be recognised for its achievements in the integration of technology into teaching and learning. The school provides assistance and guidance to all schools in the New England geographical area through the on-going implementation of its Assessment Toolbox for Learning and Support (ATLaS) project. Other major focuses for Bullimbal are the incorporation of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems and inclusive Literacy programs for all students through the Four Blocks to Literacy program.

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.

The results of this process indicated that in the **School Excellence Framework** domain of **Learning**:

In the elements of Learning Culture, Curriculum and Learning and Assessment and Reporting, Bullimbal is at Sustaining and Growing level. Evidence to support the school's position is represented in Student Profiling (Strategic Direction 2). Profiling across a number of areas enables better communication of student performance and allows for more targeted and effective personalised learning plans to be implemented. Bullimbal School uses dynamic, flexible and individualised methods of collecting, recording and communicating student information for the purpose of meeting the needs of each student within our school. Bullimbal uses extensive internal data to report-on and direct future learning. Data is collected regularly across all learning domains using adapted assessment measures and descriptors. Due to the specialised nature of the students at Bullimbal, it is difficult to articulate student-growth against any externally relevant data. As such, Bullimbal is at a Sustaining and Growing level in Assessment and Reporting and a delivering level in Student Performance Measures.

The results of this process indicated that in the **School Excellence Framework** domain of **Teaching**:

In the elements of Effective Classroom Practice, the school is at Delivering level. In the elements of Data Skills and Use, Collaborative Practice, Learning and Development and Professional Standards the school is at Sustaining and Growing levels. Bullimbal School prides itself on well-developed leadership in the domain of teaching. This is supported by

substantial use of high-quality data to inform and monitor student learning progress and identify areas for focused intervention. In addition to this, teachers rely on this information when evaluating the effectiveness of their own classroom practices. All seven of the classes at Bullimbal are Multi-Categorical and are staffed by a Teacher and School Learning Support Officer. Class sizes are developed using a factor-of-need formula and as such most classes have seven students due to their high-support and complex needs. Students at Bullimbal present with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities, Autism, Mental Health and/or Physical disabilities. The majority of students are non-verbal or have limited verbal communication skills. Development of skills in communication is fundamental to all the work undertaken at the school and this is reflected in the third Strategic Direction in the Bullimbal School Plan. Effective use of communication provides access to learning, greater independence and an improved quality of life. It also provides teachers with a means to measure student feedback and learning. Bullimbal has invested heavily in the implementation of evidence-based methods. Through the restructuring of our release from face-to-face teaching program, we have allowed for a specialist teacher to mentor and model teaching strategies with the intention of refining practices and approaches. Bullimbal uses Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems to support students in developing autonomy when communicating. These practices are heavily embedded in the Teaching of all classes at Bullimbal. For this to be possible, staff have undertaken extensive professional learning in this area. Furthering of staff capacity in this area has come about through a combination of internal and external expertise and training. When engaging the services of external service providers, the school works actively to ensure that training is explicit and customised in nature. These services are, on occasion offered externally to other schools, pre and post-school organisations and their staff.

The results of this process indicated that in the **School Excellence Framework** domain of **Leading**:

In all elements, Bullimbal is at a Sustaining and Growing level. The school has a dynamic and responsive leadership team that maintains extensive links with external-stakeholders for the purpose of supporting students and staff in building and fostering productive and supportive relationships. Executive Staff regularly reflect-on and evaluate the effectiveness of Milestones linked to the School's Plan and use this as a basis for collegial discussions with staff. Such links include strong connections with Higher Education facilities such as the University of Newcastle Medicine Unit, providing opportunities for practicum periods on site. This benefits not only the medical students, it also fosters a positive connection between students and the medical profession, as often they are heavily reliant on these professionals throughout their life. Management practices in the school support a consultation model. The executive team lead this process. The executive team have a commitment to shared responsibility for student learning and high expectations of student performance and the provision of opportunities to enhance participation in school and community activities. Bullimbal has a multi-faceted approach to its community connections and the support they provide for student learning. The school has ongoing links with a number of community-based organisations who assist the school provide additional financial assistance and resources to improve student outcomes and support the school's strategic directions. In return, Bullimbal actively engages with these organisations on a consultative level to educate, communicate and inform community members in Tamworth and surrounds. Bullimbal also uses its facilities flexibly to cater for other locally based disability-support organisations in therapy services such the heated Hydrotherapy Pool, School Hall, Sensory Room and Assessment Toolbox for Learning and Support that is available to other local mainstream schools and support classes. Hiring of these facilities allows for additional resourcing to be redirected back into the Bullimbal student population.

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

School Community

Purpose

Bullimbal's School environment and community and its specialised nature necessitate the development of ongoing and respectful relationships between staff, students, parents and carers and community members in order to achieve the best outcomes for our students. We will maintain and enhance existing relationships with parents, carers and the wider community in order to create an effective and welcoming learning environment for our students.

Overall summary of progress

Comprehensive school communication systems have been developed to provide relevant and up to date information about the school, its students and programs to the broader community including: Website, newsletter, communication books, text messages, School App and emails. A school promotional video has been developed to showcase the school purpose and programs. To further support these initiatives, the School Chaplain is utilised to maintain open, supportive and continuous lines of communication with parents and families. This allocation of resources reinforces the value the school places on the role of parents and families in their child's education. A comprehensive school promotion plan has been developed to provide ongoing and up to date information about the school and its purpose including a new brochure and information packages; social media and website. Completion of an updated school information book and intensive updating of the school website have resulted in improved communication to the broader school community. The establishment of an aesthetically pleasing, functional, and sustainable school environment incorporating a range of education programs including Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, Bush Tucker Garden, Chicken House, outdoor learning space and school grounds and playground upgrades have continued. Planning and approval has been finalised for the outdoor learning space for the Garden area and construction will be completed in early 2018. Outdoor musical instruments have been purchased and installed to further support the music therapy programs already in place at the school.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Highly individualised teaching and learning programs demonstrate adjustments derived from the combined knowledge of parents, staff and students, allowing all students to more effectively access all subject areas and school settings. This is evident in Planning and Review Meetings, Teaching Program Review Meetings and feedback and monitoring of the Professional Development Plan process of staff.	Staff release to attend meetings	Individual Planning and Review meetings have been conducted for all students at least once per year. These planning meetings are attended by parents and carers, school staff and staff from external agencies as appropriate. Continued close monitoring of Teaching and Learning programs and support of, all staff in the Performance and Development and Professional Learning process.
A measured increase in parent satisfaction in school communication processes, school purpose and the collaborative nature of highly individualised learning programs.	Staffing hours in the development of brochures, information packages and content for website and social media use. School website service Skoolbag App subscription Staffing hours in the development of resources and content for broadcast and publication. School mobile phone for text messages Individual student daily communication books	Ongoing review and modification of the school's comprehensive school communication and promotion plan that has been developed to provide ongoing and up to date information about the school and its purpose. This has included a new brochure, information packages; social media and website. This coordination of a variety of communication resources allows for flexible delivery of information to the broader school community. Ongoing review of the draft updated school information book and significant review of content on the school website has resulted in improved communication to the broader school community. The introduction of the Bullimbal Skoolbag App has further continued to support

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
A measured increase in parent satisfaction in school communication processes, school purpose and the collaborative nature of highly individualised learning programs.		communication processes and has allowed for increased flexibility in accessing school information. A school promotional video has been developed to showcase the school's purpose and programs.
All students successfully transition to accessing support from the National Disability Insurance Scheme.	Staff release Aboriginal Background Loading Staff release Equity loading	<p>The school continues to engage with a range of Departmental and Industry experts in the field of the external therapies, in line with the National Disability Insurance Scheme to develop and present Staff Professional Learning through workshops, staff meetings and distribution of professional resources.</p> <p>Professional Learning into partnerships created through the National Disability Insurance Scheme has resulted in collaboration with external service providers to support student learning and wellbeing. This is evidenced by the school and families gaining a deeper understanding of the processes involved in building and maintaining relationships between the school and external service providers for the full implementation of the NDIS this year. In addition to this, school staff have developed a greater knowledge of the associated policies, procedures and participation in planning that facilitate the implementation of individual student support systems. Parent information sessions about the National Disability Insurance Scheme have been conducted and pre planning tools have been developed and distributed to all families. A school-developed pre-planning tool for accessing the NDIS has been created through extensive review of existing information and documentation from a range of external service providers and continues to support families in accessing this</p>

Next Steps

Continued regular reviews of all communication systems, resources and processes utilised by the school, including the Planning and Review process to ensure they continue to meet family and community needs. Further Professional Learning for both Staff and Parents in the planning, implementation and review of all aspects of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the potential impact this has on students from both a home and educational perspective.

Strategic Direction 2

Student Profiling

Purpose

Highly individualised and specialised assessment of all students is required in order to fully support improved student outcomes in Life Skills, Curriculum and post school environments. Profiling of student performance across a number of areas enables better communication of student performance across settings and classes and allow for more targeted and effective personalised learning plans.

Overall summary of progress

The development of Individual Student Profiles have facilitated a process and practice of collecting information regarding student health, wellbeing and academic progress for the purpose of clear, concise and informative information sharing across staff from K–12. In addition to this, a school–developed policy has also been developed that outlines student access to external therapists during school operational hours. Following this, the Department has finalised and released its own policy for this purpose which the school is implementing.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
The number of students analysed using the school–developed Individual Student Profile has increased as evidenced by 100% of students having a completed Individualised Profile.	Staff time dedicated to the development and completion of student profiles. Executive staff hours reviewing and supporting teaching staff in writing and implementing these profiles.	The number of students analysed using the school–developed Individual Student Profile has increased as evidenced by 100% of students having a completed Individualised Profile. This has led to a greater ability to communicate student progress between all staff in order to monitor growth, track individual goals and maximise student learning in line with each student's Personalised Learning and Support Plan.
Available time for students to engage in learning tasks across the school day is maximised for all students through implementation of a school–developed Policy as evidenced by no student receiving non–school related external services for greater than 1hr per school week.	Staff time dedicated to the development of policy and consultation with Industry and Departmental advisors.	A draft policy has been partially implemented at the end of this planning cycle and will be fully implemented in the following school year. Student access to external therapists continues to be monitored to assess current time demands on students for external therapy–based activities during school operational hours as well as relevance of services being delivered to ensure they are in line with goals in each student's Personalised Learning and Support Plan.

Next Steps

The Individual Student Profiles will be further reviewed as information gathering processes are refined and adjusted to meet operational demands. Formats and communication of this information will also be further reviewed. Support by Departmental personnel continues to guide the implementation of processes for external therapists accessing students during school operational hours to ensure educational gains are maximised for all students.

Strategic Direction 3

Communication

Purpose

The ability to communicate is an essential skill for all students. At Bullimbab we recognise that all students communicate differently and may need a variety of supports to allow them to achieve our main goal of being able to communicate whatever they want, to whomever they want, whenever they want.

Overall summary of progress

All staff received professional learning in Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Systems and are using them throughout the school day in all settings. Professional Learning in AAC was provided by a speech pathologist and specialist in AAC. This training consisted of one School Development Day and 4 in-school support days involving student assessment and demonstration lessons. Further to this, a training day was facilitated for support staff from surrounding schools and new staff to Bullimbab. Staff identify the students in their class that do not have an effective communication system and assess which system would be the best for them to use. Staff are familiar with the use of Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD) and Proloquo2Go AAC systems and model to the student/s the use of these systems. A draft policy has been developed to assist with giving knowledge and understanding about the current practices that are in place in the school in regards to the development of communication programs for students. The contents of this policy have been discussed and tabled at the Team Meeting to provide guidance in the formation of a draft policy for student communication.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Student performance in Expressive and Receptive domains as identified by the Online Communication Matrix Profile indicates 10% or greater growth for all students.		Research into the validity and reliability of data retrieved using this assessment tool has indicated a number of issues/concerns, necessitating the use of a different instrument.
Student performance in the Expressive and Receptive domains as identified by the Pragmatics Profile for Everyday Communication Skills indicates performance growth of 1 score point or more across at least 2 sub sections for all students		Student assessment against the Pragmatics Profile indicated 50% of students have achieved performance growth of 1 score point or more across at least 2 sub sections of the Profile.

Next Steps

Continued consultation with industry leaders in Augmentative and Alternative Communication for the purpose of developing staff capacity in the use of specialised teaching, assessment and reporting tools in the areas of Expressive and Receptive Communication skills. Refinement of the tools used in assessment of student communication to ensure relevance to emerging knowledge and resources in the field of AAC. The draft Policy will require further refinement for the purpose of guiding assessment, the implementation of Augmentative and Alternative Communication tools and resources and reporting on student growth in Expressive and Receptive Communication areas.

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
Aboriginal background loading	Aboriginal Equity Flexible (\$21 468. 00)	Aboriginal equity funding has been used to support Planning and Review Meetings. Purchase of teaching and learning resources for Aboriginal education and student participation in whole-school events.
Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)	Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS) (\$5 383.00)	Quality Teaching, Successful Student funding has been used to provide additional Executive release to further support all staff to implement teaching and learning programs across the school.
Socio-economic background	<p>Socio-economic Equity Staff (\$10 157.00)</p> <p>Socio-economic Equity Flexible (\$32 903.00)</p>	<p>Professional Learning: Professional Learning into the new partnerships created through the National Disability Insurance Scheme has resulted in more comprehensive partnerships with external service providers to student learning and wellbeing. This is evidenced by staff gaining a deeper understanding of the processes involved in the relationship between the school and external service providers for full implementation of the NDIS in 2017. Greater knowledge of policies, procedures and participation in planning and implementing of individual student support systems. Parent information sessions about the NDIS have been conducted and pre planning tools have been developed and distributed to all families. A school developed pre planning for accessing the NDIS has been developed through extensive review of existing information and documentation from a range of external service providers. School Purpose Communication Initiatives: A completion of an updated school information book and intensive updating of the school website have resulted in improved communication to the broader school community. The introduction of the Bullimbal Skoolbag App has further supported communication processes and has allowed for increased flexibility in accessing school information. A school promotional video has been developed to showcase the school purpose and programs. Professional Learning in AAC: All staff received professional learning in Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) systems and are using them throughout the school day in all settings. Professional Learning in AAC was provided by a speech pathologist and specialist in AAC. This training consisted of 1 School Development Day and 4 in-school support days involving assessment and demonstration lessons. Further to this, two training days were facilitated for support staff from surrounding schools. Staff are familiar with the use of the AAC system and model to the student/s the use of the system.</p>

Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2014	2015	2016	2017
Boys	33	35	36	39
Girls	15	14	12	12

From the commencement of 2017, the school established an eighth class, which has permitted further student enrolments. Throughout 2017, the school increased its enrolments. For the commencement of 2018, we expect to be approaching full capacity in regards to student population and Factor of Need.

Year 12 attaining HSC or equivalent

Seven students completed their HSC in Life Skills in 2017 and graduated, transitioning into Post-School placements funded through the National Disability Insurance Scheme. These students and their parents and members of their Individual Learning Support Teams chose Post-School Service Providers that would best suit the individual needs, goals and aspirations of each student. All students engaged in a successful transition programs from school to their post-school environment commencing in Term 3 and concluding in Term 4.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	0
Assistant Principal(s)	3
Head Teacher(s)	0
Classroom Teacher(s)	5.83
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0
Learning & Support Teacher(s)	0
Teacher Librarian	0.2
Teacher of ESL	0
School Counsellor	0
School Administration & Support Staff	10.12
Other Positions	1.08

*Full Time Equivalent

In 2017, Bullimbal School had 1 Staff member that identified as Aboriginal.

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	90

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Teaching and Support Staff at Bullimbal have undertaken extensive Professional Learning in 2017, including training in the area of Augmentative and Alternative Communication, Assistive Technology, Health and Wellbeing and the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

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 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	282,787
Revenue	2,309,526
Appropriation	2,256,556
Sale of Goods and Services	4,816
Grants and Contributions	45,912
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	-496
Investment Income	2,737
Expenses	-2,123,002
Recurrent Expenses	-2,123,002
Employee Related	-1,911,233
Operating Expenses	-211,769
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	186,523
Balance Carried Forward	469,310

Following community consultation, a surplus has been maintained to allow for further allocation of funds towards the planning and construction of a larger multi purpose therapy facility at Bullimbal to meet the needs of a growing student population with increasingly complex learning needs.

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	502,237
Base Per Capita	14,314
Base Location	1,945
Other Base	485,978
Equity Total	64,528
Equity Aboriginal	21,468
Equity Socio economic	43,060
Equity Language	0
Equity Disability	0
Targeted Total	1,583,200
Other Total	13,985
Grand Total	2,163,950

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.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Bullimbal Parents continue to be satisfied with the level of communication that takes place between school and home. Due to the fact that a continued number of parents prefer electronic communication, the Skoolbag App was purchased and established as a form of continuous communication with families. This App has to date been downloaded by approximately 39 families and contains notifications and reminders of events, electronic newsletters, permission and absentee reporting capabilities.

On-going consultation with parents through the use of phone, face-to-face and written feedback survey has ensured that school management remain responsive to the needs of all students. Student satisfaction is reported as high, a greater number of students are interacting with structured activities in the playground since the commencement of additional staff on playground duties. These staff run activities for all students based on interest and enjoyment.

Student satisfaction has also been positively impacted by the greater use of Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD) communication systems across all school settings.

Staff satisfaction has continued to be positively influenced by on going Professional Learning in the areas of Augmentative and Alternative Communication(AAC), Assistive Technology and other

learning and support areas. Staff have continued to report positive progress on the level of professional support received from the school leadership team, conflict resolution and health and wellbeing during their regular supervision meetings. All Staff have continued to contribute to the Strategic Directions outlined in the School Plan.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Bullimbal School has implemented a variety of programs for all Aboriginal students to improve outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy, Cultural and Social activities. These programs have been implemented through a combination of Aboriginal Background and Low Socio Economic funds. Aboriginal Equity loading was used to support teacher release to develop initiatives in each of the three Strategic Directions as well as resources and professional learning in these areas. In 2017, Bullimbal School had an enrolment of 14 Aboriginal students (25.92%)

Multicultural and anti-racism education

Bullimbal School promotes culturally inclusive classrooms and school practices. Programs nurture the students' understanding of culture and diversity. Incursions from Musica Viva gave the students the opportunity to be immersed in some music and cultural activities. Further to this, students were involved in week long visits from community-based organisations during NAIDOC Week, allowing the development of respectful and inclusive relationships to be developed with clients and workers from Kamilaroi Ageing and Disability Services (KADS). Students also took part in Remembrance and ANZAC Day activities.