

Merriwa Central School Annual Report



2018



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Introduction

The Annual Report for **2018** is provided to the community of Merriwa Central 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.

Darren Noonan

Principal

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School background

School vision statement

Our focus on quality teaching aims to ensure all students can achieve their true potential.

"Valuing individual potential - achieving personal best".

School context

Merriwa Central School is a K–12 school (260 students including 65 Aboriginal students) located within a supportive community in the Upper Hunter. It caters to students from the local town and villages servicing a largely rural community. It is one of the oldest schools in the State and was one of the first National Schools established in 1850. Merriwa Central School is unique in several respects. Firstly it is the only central school in the Hunter Central Coast region, and secondly it is one of four central schools in the State with a separate primary and secondary campus. The primary enrolment of 140 students is divided into 6 classes, some of which are multigrade. Some classes are also across stage. The secondary enrolment of 120 is divided into classes of the same year or stage group. In some cases the class may consist of the entire enrolment for that year group. Students are taught a wide variety of subjects delivered by classroom teachers, through video conference, by distance education and at TAFE on the Muswellbrook Campus. The Upper Hunter Trade Training Centre is a joint facility in collaboration with Scone High School, Muswellbrook High School and Scone Grammar School. The Merriwa Campus enables students to complete Certificate II in Hospitality, as well as Certificate I in Metal and Engineering. The Early Action for Success (EAfS) initiative aims to improve students' performance through a targeted approach in the early years K–2. Geographic, cultural and socioeconomic disadvantage are issues for our students in a region which is dominated by the coal and electricity generation industries.

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.

In the Learning domain within the element of school culture, the building of educational aspirations and ongoing performance development throughout the school community on judgment the school is delivering. In relation to the element of wellbeing, where there is a strategic approach to develop whole school wellbeing processes that support the wellbeing of students on judgement the school is delivering. In relation to curriculum, and an integrated approach to quality teaching, curriculum planning and assessment on judgement the school is delivering. In relation to assessment and the development of school wide practices to monitor, plan and report on student learning on judgement the school is delivering. In reporting that is clear, timely and accurate that supports achievement for all student learning across the curriculum on judgement the school is sustaining and growing. In relation to student performance measures, whereby students consistently perform at high levels on external and internal school performance measures on judgment the school is delivering.

In the Teaching domain, within the element of effective classroom practice, teachers are committed to identifying, understanding and implementing the most effective explicit teaching methods on judgement the school is delivering. In the element data skills use, whereby student assessment data is regularly used to identify student achievements and progress in order to reflect on teaching effectiveness, on judgement the school is delivering. In the element of professional standards whereby staff demonstrate personal responsibility for maintaining and developing their professional standards, on judgement the school is delivering. In the element of learning and development, whereby professional learning is aligned with the school plan, and its impact on the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes, on judgement the school is delivering.

In the Leading domain, within the element of educational leadership the principal and school leadership team model instructional leadership and support a culture of high expectations, on judgment the school is delivering. In the element of school planning, implementation and reporting, whereby the school plan is at the core of continuous improvement efforts, on judgement the school is delivering. In the element of school resources, whereby resources are used strategically to achieve improved student outcomes, on judgement the school is delivering. In the element of management practices and processes, administrative systems, structures and processes underpin ongoing school improvement, on judgment the school is delivering.

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

Teaching and Learning

Purpose

Through a focus on Teaching and Learning every student is actively engaged in meaningful and challenging learning experiences that allow them to thrive at their own pace.

Staff undertake ongoing professional learning in order to enhance their practice and cultivate collaborative learning environments where they systematically and strategically review both student and staff progress based on evidence, self–reflection and feedback.

Overall summary of progress

The majority of staff are in the early years of their careers, with less than five years teaching experience. For many in permanent and temporary positions this is their first appointment since graduating university. The strategic direction of teaching and learning has a focus on developing the capacity of staff to effectively implement evidence based practices into teaching and learning in a supportive and collaborative environment.

Beginning teachers were supported through additional release time to assist planning and organisation, and time to reflect on classroom practice supported by constructive feedback from their supervisers. A teacher mentor was employed to assist staff with the demands of NESA accreditation, the performance and development process, lesson observations, and liaison with school executive.

Teachers were encouraged to embed a strong focus on critical thinking, and engage students through the use of technology in the classroom. Hardware was upgrading in a number of classrooms to improve access to technologies, and several teachers modelled the development and use of Google classrooms, Onenote and Moodle. However the take—up of these strategies was not consistent across the school, due to the varying skill levels of staff.

The Early Action for Success (EAFS) program provided strategic support for students and teachers focusing on early years development of literacy skills. L3 strategies were implemented across K–2 and supported by an Instructional Leader three days per week.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures			
Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year	
School data shows that student progress and achievement is greater than students at statistically similar schools on external measures, and this is consistent with strong student progress and achievement on internal measures. Teachers employ evidence—based effective teaching strategies. Effective methods are identified, promoted and modelled, and students' learning improvement is monitored, demonstrating growth. Teachers clearly understand, develop and apply a full range of assessment strategies — assessment for learning, assessment as learning and assessment of learning — in determining teaching directions,	Teacher Mentor • Support for beginning teachers (\$25000.00) Release for professional development Upgrade technology hardware • Socio–economic background (\$36000.00) Instructional Leader \$90,000	Beginning teachers were provided additional release to assist with planning, organisation professional learning and mentoring. The majority of staff are early career teachers, and with 30% of executive relieving in higher duties positions additional support for staff is required K–12. 100% of eligible beginning teachers (Two Primary Staff) successfully completed the NESA accreditation process at Proficient level. Performance and development plans in place for all staff, with clear processes arround HSC monitoring. All teachers provided with laptops to assist programming, roll marking, and integration of technology into classrooms. Obsolete interactive whiteboard gradually replaced across K–12 classrooms. STEM initiatives implemented, with new elective course commenced in Stage 5. Speech: In 2018, K–2 students were screened by a speech pathologist from Upper Hunter Community	
monitoring and assessing student		Health. 11 students were identified as requiring	

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		
Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
progress and achievement, and reflecting on teaching effectiveness.		support through an individualised program which was completed over three school terms.
		K–2 Reading:
		71% of kindergarten students reached or surpassed the end of year EAfS reading benchmark/L3 reading target (level 9 texts)
		74% of Year 1 students reached or surpassed the end of year EAfS reading benchmark/L3 reading target (level 17 texts)
		75% of Year 2 students reached or surpassed the end of year EAfS reading benchmark/L3 reading target (level 21 texts)
		In 2018, 73% of all K–2 students reached or surpassed the end of year EAfS reading benchmarks/L3 reading targets.

Next Steps

Implementation of standardised K–6 Mathematics scope and sequence and programming template supported by Austrlian Mathematical Sciences Institute (AMSI) CHOOSEMATHS outreach program.

Participation in Building Numeracy Leadership (BNL) professional learning and big ideas project. to enhance the capacity of executive to lead numeracy development.

Implementation of pilot program 'Pathways to Proficency" with Integrated Enterprise Learning (IEL) to support new scheme teachers with accreditation.

Upgrading qualifications for VET teachers, and retraining new staff in Business Services and Construction to provide continuity in currciulum for Stage 6 students.

Strategic Direction 2

Wellbeing

Purpose

The wellbeing of every student is a priority. A whole school focus on student and staff wellbeing will enhance student engagement and reinvigorate staff. A collegial work environment supports staff to provide a range of rich learning experiences to students whilst maintaining an appropriate work—life balance.

Overall summary of progress

The wellbeing of staff and students was a major focus in 2018 with the school collaborating with "Where There's A Will" Foundation and Upper Hunter schools to complete Visible Wellbeing Training. This initiative funded by "Where There's A Will" aims to provide a consistent approach to wellbeing across all schools in the Upper Hunter.

The school undertook a significant review of student wellbeing processes and created two new positions above establishment, a wellbeing teacher and Deputy Principal (Student Wellbeing) to address the increasing needs of students impacted by trauma and mental health conditions. A key function of these new positions was to liaise with external agencies to connect students and parents with service providers.

Staff teams undertook a range of professional development around meeting the needs of students impacted by trauma, and how to manage and de–escalate volatile bahaviours. A specialist time–out space was constructed on the primary campus.

An evaluation of our learning and support policy was completed and processes clarified and communicated to all staff to more effectively use school data, and track and monitor the referral process for students to ensure support is provide in a timely manner.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures			
Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year	
Implementation of evidence–based change to whole school practices, resulting in measurable improvements in wellbeing and engagement to support learning.	Wellbeing teacher role established Term 1 \$50,000 Deputy Principal – commenced Term 4 • Socio–economic background (\$35000.00)	Focus meetings were held with students across Stage 3 to 6. All year groups highlighted that they enjoyed their small school, getting to know teachers well, and many great facilities. Feedback indicated that students liked their teachers who were fun, supportive and approachable. It also highlighted that the school had a culture of promoting girls involvement in sport. Focus meetings reported positive feedback from students in regard to the establishment of the secondary wellbeing room as a place students could find assistance with time—out, help with assignments, uniform and food.	
Positive, respectful relationships are evident and widespread among students and staff and promote student wellbeing to ensure optimum conditions for student learning across the whole school as evidenced in VW and TTFM data.		TTFM data indicates an improvement in Advocacy (Years 7, 9, 10, 12), Expectations for Success (Years 10, 12) and Sense of Belonging (Years 7, 10, 12) compared to 2017 data.	

Next Steps

Staff will complete Visible Wellbeing training in 2019 and develop an action plan for its implementation.

Changes to learning support team processes will be consolidated, and ongoing monitoring, case management and

support of students with significant support needs will continue.

Key executive members will complete training in Functional Behaviour Assessment in order to assist teachers meet the needs of students with challenging behaviours.

In collaboration with Student Services the school will investigate the requirements to establish a support class in primary to further support all students.

Strategic Direction 3

Community

Purpose

The success of every student is based upon the successful partnership between the school, parents and the broader community. A shared vision ensures continued community confidence in Merriwa Central School and it's students. The school is embraced by the community with a shared vision and advocacy.

Overall summary of progress

An effective partnership between teachers and parents is essential in order to maximise learning outcomes for students.

In 2018 we trialled a new strategy to engage parents in their childs learning through the establishment of a parent class liaison role. The effectiveness of this strategy was mixed, with varied feedback from parents and staff.

Feedback was sought from parents in regard to changes to the school uniform, and the introduction of a unisex polo top for students K–10.

Industry links continue to be very strong through work expereince, work placement, and the school based traineeship programs. School Captain Tarnisha Winsor was recognised for her achievement at the Australian Training Awards and was awarded Runner Up "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year" for 2018.

Partnerships with external agencies were consolidated to provide ongoing supprt to students through collaboration with Upper Hunter Youth Services, the Ochre Learning Hub, Ungooroo Youth Workers and the Merriwa Mens Shed.

The ongoing drought had a significant impact on the Merriwa community, with a number of organisations providing relief to the local community. A major event at the end of the year was a visit by Santa armed with Christmas presents for each student in the school. This was an amazing event coordinated by the Lions Club, demonstrating generosity of spirit and finances at a time when the community was suffering from ongoing drought.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		
Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
The leadership team measures school community (parent and student) satisfaction and shares its analysis and actions in response to the findings with its community.		Intensive consultation took place with parents and uniform suppliers as the school planned to revise its uniform policy. Feedback was sought from parents through surveys, consultation took place at P&C meetings, designs were published in the school newsletter and Facebook page. A plan for implementation and transition to reduce the financial burden on parents was developed and published in Term 4.
School staff collaborate with the school community to use student progress and achievement data to identify strategic priorities, and develop and implement plans for continuous improvement. Strategies implemented reflect research on best practice and include ongoing monitoring of success.		Focus meetings were held with parents to develop the school strategic priorities, and regular feedback provided at P&C meetings, parent interviews and through the school newsletter. The school has well established links with community and employer organisations. The Merriwa Ringer (the town newsletter) has been published weekly by the school for the past 28 years. The school based traineeship program continues to provide pathways to employment for senior students and attained national recognition in 2018.

Next Steps

Introduction of new school uniform in 2019 for students K–10, with transition costs subsidised jointly by school and P&C Association.

Review community engagement practices and map current school and community communication.

Support the re–establishment of the P&C to play a positive role in supporting the school and enhancing learning opportunities for students. Workshops to be held with parents to build capacity of office bearers.

Engage with parents to support their childs learning through a range of workshops and local initiatives such as Little Sprouts Reading Day.

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
Aboriginal background loading	\$120 000	Additional learning support officers were employed in K–6 to assist students engage in their learning and enhance literacy and numeracy support.
		The EAfS program supported Aboriginal students in K–2:
		Kindergarten: no students identified as Aboriginal
		Year 1: 100% of Aboriginal students reached or surpassed the end of year EAfS reading benchmark/L3 reading target (level 17 texts)
		Year 2: 75% of Aboriginal students reached or surpassed the end of year EAfS reading benchmark/L3 reading target (level 17 texts)
Low level adjustment for disability	\$86,000	In 2018, K–2 students were screened by a speech pathologist from Upper Hunter Community Health. 11 students were identified as requiring support through an individualised program which was completed over three school terms.
		Support was provided to students through the employment of a Deputy Principal (Student Wellbeing) to improve case management of support services to individual students.
Socio-economic background	\$140000	Quicksmart Numeracy support was provided to 53 students Yr 4–9. The Effect Size for division of 0.849 indicated substantial improvement. In terms of accuracy average score on Division increased by 20.423 percentage points. This Effect Size shows substantial improvement.
		The analysis of PAT–M Australian standardised test data was completed based pre and post intervention. The results indicated a strong gain 4.071 for Quicksmart students. Indigenous students showed improvement with a slightly smaller gain 3.4.
Support for beginning teachers	\$25000	Additional release was provided to beginning teachers to assist with programming, lesson preparation and organisation. A teacher mentor was employed to assist with critical feedback and accreditation processes. Two teachers gained accreditation at Proficient level in 2018.

Student information

Student enrolment profile

	Enrolments			
Students	2015	2016	2017	2018
Boys	141	129	135	128
Girls	134	145	149	132

Student enrolments have been relatively stable over the past four years. with a steady increase in K–6 enrolments. The ongoing impact of the drought is anticipated to have a negative impact upon enrolments in 2019.

Student attendance profile

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10 87.7 87.6 87.3 86.1 11 88.2 88.2 88.2 86.6 12 89.9 90.1 90.1 89	8	90.6	90.5	90.5	89.3
11 88.2 88.2 86.6 12 89.9 90.1 90.1 89	9	89.3	89.1	89.1	87.7
12 89.9 90.1 90.1 89	10	87.7	87.6	87.3	86.1
	11	88.2	88.2	88.2	86.6
All Years 92.3 92.3 91.5	12	89.9	90.1	90.1	89
	All Years	92.3	92.3	92.3	91.5

Management of non-attendance

The school aims to encourage regular attendance through communication in the school newsletter, phone calls home to parents and recognition in student welfare programs. Where necessary support is requested through the Home School Liaison Officer to assist student improve attendance at school.

Post-school destinations

Proportion of students moving into post-school education, training or employment	Year 10 %	Year 11 %	Year 12 %
Seeking Employment	0	0	0
Employment	0	10	30
TAFE entry	0	0	20
University Entry	0	0	30
Other	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	20

Twenty five percent of Year 12 students have commenced University study in 2019, three are attending TAFE with two of these students completing traineeship/apprenticeships in Business and Metal. Three students are working in the local area and one student has moved away.

Year 12 vocational or trade training

School to Work pathways for 2018 Higher School certificate students reflect the diverse nature of the student cohort. Of the 10 students who sat the Higher School Certificate five studied a vocational course during Stage 6 at school. Two students studied two Vocational courses for their Higher School Certificate.

Two Year 12 students commenced School Based Traineeships in Year 11. One in Hospitality and the other in Human Services via Adobe connect from TAFE Western. Two other students in Year 12 completed School Based Traineeships at the end of Year 11 in Business Services and Early Childhood and Education. These were commenced in Stage 5.

2018 also saw Merriwa Central School students achieve success in a number of vocational areas. Paige McConnell achieved a silver medal at the National World Skills VETiS competition in Business Services. Emily Towell received the Peter Hilder Award for best indigenous School Based Trainee in the Hunter Region and Tarnisha Winsor received the NSW State Training Services award in the Indigenous Traineeship Apprenticeship category and went onto receive the Runner Up award at the National level.

Year 12 attaining HSC or equivalent

All Year 12 students (100%) attained the Higher School Certificate.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal(s)	1
Deputy Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	2
Head Teacher(s)	3
Classroom Teacher(s)	13.61
Learning and Support Teacher(s)	1.2
Teacher Librarian	1
School Administration and Support Staff	7.09
Other Positions	0.2

*Full Time Equivalent

The Australian Education Regulation requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce. Currently no staff identify 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	0

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Professional learning activities are embedded within the strategic direction of the school plan, and outlined for individual teachers in their performance and development plans. Most teachers on staff are in the early years of teaching and are focused on gaining NESA accreditation at Proficient level.

Financial information

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018.

Printed on: 7 June, 2019

	2018 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	1,029,150
Revenue	4,548,061
Appropriation	4,391,838
Sale of Goods and Services	24,205
Grants and Contributions	111,714
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	7,232
Investment Income	13,072
Expenses	-4,465,376
Recurrent Expenses	-4,465,376
Employee Related	-3,879,741
Operating Expenses	-585,635
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	82,685
Balance Carried Forward	1,111,835

The school has clear processes for the financial management of funds, with the use of equity funding outlined in the School Plan 2018–2020.

- the schools financial management processes and governance structures align to Department financial policy requirements
- the school community has identified the need for a school hall to accommodate all students K–12, savings for planned capital expenditure of \$400,000 have been accrued. Consultation with the Department has occurred in regard to a joint funding initiative.
- the school has an underspend in equity funding due to the shortage of casual and permanent teachers. The Head Teacher English position has been advertised on three occasions and remains unfilled.

Financial summary equity funding

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

	2018 Actual (\$)
Base Total	3,316,458
Base Per Capita	54,917
Base Location	134,928
Other Base	3,126,614
Equity Total	611,439
Equity Aboriginal	89,121
Equity Socio economic	347,561
Equity Language	0
Equity Disability	174,756
Targeted Total	76,698
Other Total	207,102
Grand Total	4,211,697

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.

From 2018 to 2020 NAPLAN is moving from a paper test to an online test. Individual schools are migrating to the online test, with some schools attempting NAPLAN on paper and others online.

Results for both online and paper formats are reported on the same NAPLAN assessment scale. Any comparison of NAPLAN results – such as comparisons to previous NAPLAN results or to results for students who did the assessment in a different format – should take into consideration the different test formats and are discouraged during these transition years.

Year 5 students demonstrated growth above State average in Grammar and Punctuation.

Year 7 students demonstrated growth above State average in Grammar and Punctuation, Numeracy, Reading, Spelling and Writing.

Year 9 students demonstrated growth above State average in Reading.

Year 5 students demonstrated growth in Numeracy slightly below statistically similar school.

Year 7 students demonstrated growth in Numeracy above State and statistically similar schools.

Year 9 students demonstrated growth in Numeracy above State and statistically similar schools.

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.

Due to the small number of Aboriginal students in each cohort it is difficult to report against the Premiers Priorities in regard to the percentage of students in the top two bands.

However Year 5 Aboriginal students demonstrated growth above State average, and statistically similar schools in Grammar and Punctuation.

Year 7 Aboriginal students demonstrated growth above State average in Grammar and Punctuation, Numeracy, Reading and Writing.

Year 9 Aboriginal students demonstrated growth above State average in Numeracy and Spelling.

Higher School Certificate (HSC)

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

Nine students sat for the Higher School Certificate in 2018. Individual course data is not available due to the small cohort size of the class.

Nine students sat for the Higher School Certificate in 2018. Individual course data is not available due to the small cohort size of the class.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Focus meetings were held with parents to guide the strategic directions of the School Plan 2018–2020.

Significant consultation and feedback was sought from students and parents in regard to the implementation of a new school uniform. The school has moved from a gender based uniform, to a unisex polo top for boys and girls. Initial surveys were completed with parents, samples of uniform considered, feedback through the school Facebook page and the school newsletter. In consultation with the P&C the school planned to

subsidise the initial cost of uniforms to ease the financial burden on parents during the transition phase.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Our Aboriginal education program is designed to educate all students about Aboriginal histories, culture and perspectives. A significant component of our Aboriginal program is to develop an understanding of local Aboriginal culture through site visits to Hands On Rock and The Drip.

Improving educational outcomes for all students was demonstrated through our school leadership and vocational programs. Our school captain Tarnisha Winsor won national acclaim as Runner Up Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year at the Australian Training Awards, after winning the New South Wales Award.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

The school promotes positive and inclusive values for all students. Mr Grant is the designated school anti–racism officer, and all matters are dealt with in a respectful and procedurally fair manner to support all students.

The students have participated in Harmony Day activities, and an African drumming program was introduced to primary and secondary students.