

Birrong Public School

Annual Report



BIRRONG PUBLIC SCHOOL

Our vision is to be a dynamic school with a collaborative learning environment where all students are supported, challenged and inspired to be resourceful, happy and successful citizens.



2018



4057

Introduction

The Annual Report for **2018** is provided to the community of Birrong Public School as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

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

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Principal

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School background

School vision statement

To be a dynamic school with a collaborative learning environment where all students are supported, challenged and inspired to be resourceful, happy and successful citizens.

School context

Birrong Public School provides learning opportunities for approximately 560 students. The school is located in the Chullora Principals Network – Metropolitan South Operational Directorate. The school caters for a diverse student population, with 87% of students from a language background other than English. There are currently 38 language backgrounds, with Vietnamese and Arabic speaking backgrounds the largest groups.

Students, staff, parents and community members are committed to strengthening partnerships to improve student learning outcomes. High standards are set and encouraged in teaching and learning programs. Opportunities for students are available in many areas including creative and performing arts, debating, sport, environmental education and student leadership. As a Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) school, Birrong follows a holistic approach to child development and wellbeing.

Birrong Public School has an uncompromising focus on teaching and learning with a dedicated staff who have a range of teaching experience. There are approximately 47 school based personnel including executive staff, classroom teachers, specialist EAL/D and Learning and Support (LaS) teachers, a school counsellor, administrative staff and a general assistant.

Self-assessment and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, school achievements and the next steps to be pursued. The framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

Our staff worked collegially for two sessions to reference, select and determine if our school was Delivering, Sustaining and Growing or Excelling in each element of the School Excellence Framework. Sources of evidence included; internal and external student assessment data such as ESL scales, PLAN data, Instructional Rounds findings, NAPLAN data, student, teacher and parent Tell them From Me survey data, parent High Expectations Authentic Relationships survey data, teachers' Performance and Development Plans, student attendance data, minutes of meetings including P&C, and our Positive Behaviour for Learning data. During these sessions, staff discussed and maintained an annotated record of why a piece of evidence was significant and how it linked to the School Excellence Framework and whether it demonstrated we were delivering, sustaining and growing or excelling.

A focus within the **Learning** domain included the Wellbeing element – Caring for students. This was achieved by teachers asking students key questions about learning such as: *Can you name two adults in this school who believe you'll be a success in life?* This enabled teachers to gain a deeper insight into their learners and gauge how connected they were to the school. This knowledge assisted teachers to provide greater advice, support and assistance to help students fulfil their potential. Evidence collected indicated that the school was *Sustaining and Growing* in Wellbeing.

Within the **Teaching** domain, the school focused on the Professional Learning theme within the Learning and Development element. Teachers received an additional 2 hours of release from face to face teaching per fortnight to collaborate in a Spiral of Inquiry to gain a deeper understanding of their learners, be informed by current research in learning, and implement effective teaching to change the outcomes for students in English and Mathematics. Evidence collected indicated the school was Excelling in the area of Professional Learning.

In the **Leading** domain, the school focused on the Community Satisfaction theme of the Educational Leadership element. This included an Effective Connections team communicating and implementing parent surveys and analysing feedback to plan and prioritise authentic engagement with curriculum activities for parents. Evidence collected indicated the school was Excelling in the area of Community Satisfaction.

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

Learners at the Centre

Purpose

To provide an environment where all students are challenged and supported to become self-regulated learners who understand what they are learning, why the learning is important and where to next. Students are to be motivated, confident and creative individuals with the personal resources for future success and wellbeing.

Overall summary of progress

Teachers took part in further professional learning around critical and creative thinking and creating future-focused learners. Stage groups collaboratively planned literacy and numeracy lesson sequences developed from evidence-based rubrics and professional advice delivered by education academic Dr Kylie Shaw. Lessons were implemented by stage teams, and saw students become highly engaged in tasks that required them to self-regulate, problem-solve and innovate. Experiences and reflections on the process were shared with the professional learning network of schools, facilitating and promoting the continued implementation of rubrics to drive creative and critical thinking teaching opportunities at Birrong Public School.

In teams, teachers demonstrated that they have maintained their knowledge of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria (LISC) gained in Personal Learning Communities and professional learning in previous years. In many stages, teachers planned LISC cooperatively for their English and Mathematics programs. A large percentage of teachers also commenced including LISC in other Key Learning Areas.

Executives attended professional learning with a consultant to observe quality literacy programs developed with Literacy Learning Progressions.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Increased p/a number of students who can identify what they are learning and why the learning is important.	Spiral of Inquiry professional learning funding and QTSS funding.	Teachers commenced asking and recording student responses to determine if they could identify what they are learning and why it is important. Students from 16 out of 22 classes completed an online Spiral of Inquiry key questions survey.
100% of students can articulate a clear learning goal in Literacy and Numeracy.	QTSS Funding utilised to coach and mentor teachers in effectively utilising learning goals.	All students in Early Stage 1 had a Literacy and Numeracy goal visually displayed in each classroom. Stages 1, 2 and 3 introduced learning goals.
Increased proportion of students achieving expected growth across the DoE Literacy and Numeracy Progressions.	QTSS Funding utilised.	PLAN utilised by teachers in Early Stage 1 and Stage 1. Application and use of the Numeracy Progression was explored in one Year 5 class.

Next Steps

- Stage teams to continue to use 21st Century Learning Design rubrics when planning lessons and units of work in literacy and numeracy to ensure students' creative and critical thinking skills continue to grow.
- Ongoing opportunities to share ideas, experiences and reflections between stages and schools.
- Teachers will commence using the Literacy and Numeracy Progressions with a sharpened focus on reading.

Strategic Direction 2

Evidence Based Teaching

Purpose

To share responsibility for student improvement through the collaborative analysis of data which informs the selection of effective, explicit and evidence based teaching practices that are responsive to the needs of all students to promote strong student growth.

Overall summary of progress

The school utilised funds to release teachers for an additional two hours per fortnight to meet with their stage and engage in a Spiral of Inquiry. Each stage targeted an area of need in Literacy or Numeracy and used this time to research, develop, implement and evaluate effective strategies to improve teaching and learning practices in order to make 'enough of a difference' for students. An emphasis of the Spiral of Inquiry approach was to shift teachers' **thinking** of what was going on for our learners to **knowing** what was going on, based on evidence to support judgments. Teachers engaged in robust conversations that challenged current practices.

Members of the Strategic Direction 2, Process 2 team worked to support the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) structures at Birrong Public School by evaluating the systems and practices that underpin student wellbeing. This was done through the establishment of a Google share drive to collect and organise data about positive and corrective strategies used across the school. Analysis of data identified successful approaches and areas for improvement that were reported to staff. A data board was established in the staff room to share data.

Lifeskills and Peer Support were two programs that successfully supported student wellbeing. All students from K–6 participated in Lifeskills across 2018. Staff, students and parents completed surveys on the Lifeskills and Peer Support programs. Staff were also surveyed on PBL systems and practices for 2018. The results of these surveys were used to improve processes for 2019.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Student progress on internal and external measures in Literacy and Numeracy demonstrate improvement by an effect size of 0.4 p/a for all learners.	\$120000 to fund external provider of PDHPE RFF program to release teachers.	Stage leaders commenced developing their knowledge and skills in the application of effect size data to determine student progress with learning.
PBL data demonstrates an improved annual ratio of positive to negative incidents.	\$11049 to cover PBL resources and teacher release for Professional Learning.	<p>The school scored 83% on the Tiered Fidelity Index conducted by the external PBL Coach Mentor demonstrating that the school's universal systems and practices are effectively implemented and consistently supported.</p> <p>Internal PBL data demonstrated a significant positive ratio of incidents as compared to negative incidents recorded across the school.</p>

Next Steps

- The Spiral of Inquiry model, to further support teacher professional learning to improve student outcomes in reading, is to continue in 2019.
- The Drama Toolbox wellbeing program will commence in 2019 for students in Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2. Its focus is to bring key areas of the Social Emotional Learning program into the classroom using drama.
- Two teachers were trained in the Rock and Water program with the intention that this will be implemented to support student wellbeing for Years 3–6.

Strategic Direction 3

Effective Connections

Purpose

To increase community participation in our school where teachers directly and regularly engage with parents/carers to improve understanding of student learning and wellbeing so that the goals and aspirations of our community are realised.

Overall summary of progress

An Effective Connections team was formed to support our school vision. The team consisted of executive and teaching staff who met several times throughout the year to drive this strategic direction. All scheduled meetings were communicated to the P&C and members of the broader school community were invited to attend to contribute towards developing planned activities to increase authentic community engagement with curriculum. Community feedback was sought through the parents/carers Tell the From Me survey. The feedback was analysed and communicated to the staff to help inform the school's future directions for 2019. Accessibility to the survey by parents was increased through the introduction of a QR Code supporting parents to easily access the survey through their smart phones and tablets. This resulted in an increased number of surveys being completed. Parents/carers also had opportunity to complete an online High Expectations and Authentic Relationships survey that was also made accessible through a QR Code. A total of 237 parents/carers completed this survey. The results were also analysed and communicated to staff and to the community via the school newsletter. The feedback was extremely positive with the majority of our community indicating that Birrong Public School was a place of learning with high expectations.

The majority of students K–6 also completed an online Spiral of Inquiry key questions survey to determine if they could name two adults in our school who believed they would be a success in life. The majority of students indicated that they could name either one or two adults which indicated that effective connections exist between staff and students.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Increased p/a number of parents/carers engaging in school events and programs.		A limited number of parents attended the Effective Connections team meetings and contributed to the planning process. Regular authentic community engagement with curriculum afternoons planned for 2019.
Increased p/a number of parents/carers feel welcome, informed and included in the school.	Stationery as required.	A total of 45 parents/carers completed the TTFM Parent survey with the results indicating a slight increase in parents feeling welcome and informed compared to 2017. This included 6.9 out of 10 feeling welcome and 6.1 out of 10 indicating they were informed. High Expectations and Authentic Relationships survey results indicated that 88% of parents/carers responded that teachers create and sustain a caring climate and 85% of parents/carers responded that teachers have a long term commitment to our community.
Increased p/a number of students who can identify two adults who believe they will be a success in life.	Short term casual relief.	Online student Spiral of Inquiry key questions surveys indicated 79.4% of students were able to name one adult who believe they will be a success in life and 71.9% of students were able to name a second adult.

Next Steps

- 0.6 Community Liaison Officer position to be advertised with the successful candidate to be employed early 2019.
- Parent/Community authentic engagement with curriculum events to be planned for 2019.
- Student Spirals of Inquiry key questions survey to be conducted and analysed again in 2019.

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
Aboriginal background loading	Socio-economic background equity funds were utilised to support the school's work in this area as we did not have specific loading funds. The school did not have any identified Aboriginal students in 2018.	The Aboriginal Education Committee organised an exhibition for the school and wider community to promote NAIDOC Week. Students were engaged in activities to learn more about Aboriginal culture, perspectives and histories.
English language proficiency	\$145758 (staffing) and \$35172 flexible funding for teacher release and employment of School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs) as required.	Our school continued to conduct initial and ongoing assessments to understand students' English language proficiency. Specialist EAL/D (English as an Additional Language or Dialect) teachers provided support to cater for the specific needs of students from a language background other than English (LBOTE). The aim of the EAL/D support was to develop EAL/D students' English language competence across the curriculum so that they would be able to achieve equitable educational outcomes. The EAL/D support was delivered in a variety of ways and differentiated instruction was used to meet the individual needs of the students.
Low level adjustment for disability	\$187403 (staffing) and \$92293 utilised for the employment of School learning Support Officers (SLSOs) and teacher release.	Relieving Assistant Principal Learning and Support employed. An additional 0.2 employment of Learning and Support Teacher (LaST) to monitor/support students at risk and relieve the Learning Support Team (LST) coordinator. Students requiring support for transition were identified and supported by LST members. Teachers released to develop Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and consult parents in the process.
Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)	0.973 staffing allocation with \$101302 utilised to release teachers to meet with supervising Assistant Principals.	Professional learning goals for 2018 realised and used to determine in-school, Community of Schools (CoS) and other PL opportunities.
Socio-economic background	\$349314 utilised to support the employment of additional staffing and/or projects.	All students received Literacy and Numeracy programs that were responsive to their needs. Employment of 3 School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs) supported identified students in the classrooms. Employment of additional School Administration Officer (SAO) for assessment data entry and wellbeing program maintenance. A speech pathologist was employed for one day per week to work with teachers in K-6 classrooms. Lifeskills, a wellbeing program, was utilised again in 2018 to support students K-6 in the development of their social and emotional resilience and self-regulation skills. Equity funds were also used to improve teaching and learning spaces for students with the installation of boards for formative assessment.
Support for beginning teachers	As per funding received for Beginning Teachers.	In Semester 2, mentor teacher employed 3 days a week to support beginning teachers develop literacy programs. Success of the mentoring program noted in teacher feedback. Temporary teachers who received

Support for beginning teachers	As per funding received for Beginning Teachers.	support particularly noted the benefit of working with a mentor and identified new skills and learning to take into 2019.
Targeted student support for refugees and new arrivals	As per funding received.	Our school continued to provide targeted student support for refugees and new arrivals to enable students to settle successfully into school. EAL/D teachers attended network meetings to better support students from refugee backgrounds and new arrivals. The New Arrivals Program in our school was implemented daily. By the end of 2018, the new arrivals and refugee students demonstrated improvement in English language proficiency to better access the school curriculum.

Student information

applications for extended leave travel.

Student enrolment profile

	Enrolments			
Students	2015	2016	2017	2018
Boys	261	276	285	289
Girls	300	283	288	270

Total student enrolment numbers slightly reduced in 2018 as compared to 2017. This year there was also a slight decrease in the number of girls enrolled compared to boys.

Student attendance profile

School				
Year	2015	2016	2017	2018
K	94.6	95.2	92.5	93.4
1	93.3	95.2	95	91.1
2	91.6	94	95.4	92.8
3	93.6	95.2	94.2	93.5
4	94.8	94.4	95.2	92.8
5	93.2	94.9	94.7	93.8
6	94.8	95.3	95.3	92.4
All Years	93.7	94.9	94.6	92.8
State DoE				
Year	2015	2016	2017	2018
K	94.4	94.4	94.4	93.8
1	93.8	93.9	93.8	93.4
2	94	94.1	94	93.5
3	94.1	94.2	94.1	93.6
4	94	93.9	93.9	93.4
5	94	93.9	93.8	93.2
6	93.5	93.4	93.3	92.5
All Years	94	94	93.9	93.4

Class sizes

Class	Total
K YELLOW	21
K RED	20
K BLUE	21
1 AQUA	21
1/2 GOLD	23
1 WHITE	21
1 ORANGE	22
2 BLACK	25
2 SILVER	26
2 PURPLE	26
3_4 EUCALYPTUS	30
3 TEAL	25
3 LIME	27
3_4 FERN	27
4 JADE	30
4 EMERALD	29
5 MAGENTA	28
5_6 CRIMSON	27
5_6 RUBY	30
5 SCARLET	26
6 VIOLET	29
6 GARNET	28

Management of non-attendance

Student attendance was discussed at fortnightly team meetings, Learning and Support meetings and executive meetings. Text message notifications were sent to parents as well as phone calls by teachers and executive. Students with attendance rates below 85% were monitored and followed up by the executive through the Lateness and Attendance Monitoring Program or referred to the Home School Liaison Officer. The school also processed over 100

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal(s)	1
Deputy Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	4
Classroom Teacher(s)	20.88
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0.74
Learning and Support Teacher(s)	1.8
Teacher Librarian	1
Teacher ESL	1.4
School Counsellor	1
School Administration and Support Staff	4.06

*Full Time Equivalent

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

Teacher qualifications

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

Teacher qualifications

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

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

In 2018 pre-2004 teachers made the transition to maintaining their accreditation and started using the online eTAMS system to record professional learning.

Teachers seeking accreditation at proficient participated in school-based workshops to understanding their professional requirements and how to structure an accreditation report. This involved examining examples of annotations and identifying evidence that can be used to address each of the Australian Standards. Teachers wrote annotations, shared these with colleagues and received feedback to refine their annotations.

Since the workshops, teachers have been working with their supervisors to develop their applications. Two beginning teachers were successful in achieving Accreditation at Proficient in 2018.

Financial information

Financial summary

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

	2018 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	423,267
Revenue	5,464,052
Appropriation	5,214,321
Sale of Goods and Services	21,050
Grants and Contributions	223,281
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	756
Investment Income	4,643
Expenses	-5,091,963
Recurrent Expenses	-5,091,963
Employee Related	-4,429,060
Operating Expenses	-662,904
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	372,088
Balance Carried Forward	795,355

The school's financial management processes include the development of a school budget with staff input, strategic financial management practices and monthly monitoring and tracking of expenditure which is overseen by the Principal with the support of the School Administration Manager. In 2018 consultative support from a Business Manager was obtained periodically to ensure the school met the Department's financial policy requirements.

The school intends to spend its available funds on projects that will continue into 2019.

- Development of interactive playground activities for the back playground (including a boardwalk).
- Replacement of classroom air conditioners.
- Continued replacement of classroom interactive whiteboards.
- Contribution to the school's maintenance projects.
- Development of flexible learning and parent consultation spaces.

NAPLAN Reading results for Years 3 and 5 are featured in the graphs.

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	3,798,978
Base Per Capita	110,801
Base Location	0
Other Base	3,688,177
Equity Total	809,940
Equity Aboriginal	0
Equity Socio economic	349,314
Equity Language	180,930
Equity Disability	279,697
Targeted Total	150,714
Other Total	326,200
Grand Total	5,085,832

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

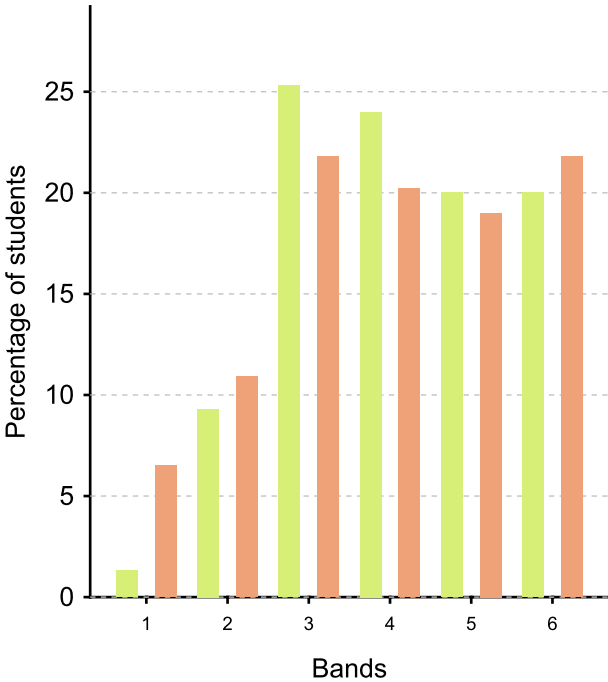
NAPLAN

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.

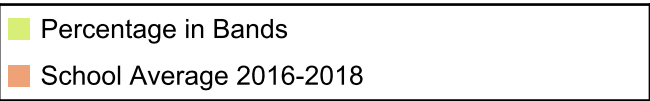
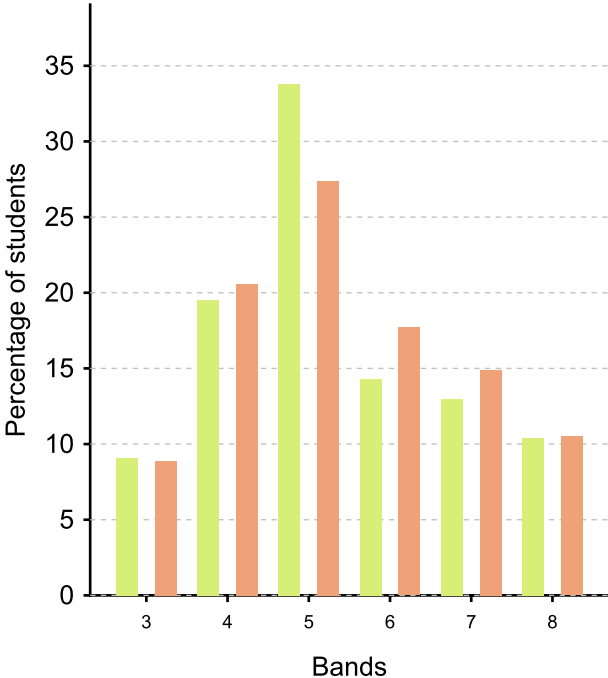
From 2018 to 2020 NAPLAN is moving from a paper test to an online test. Individual schools are migrating to the online test, with some schools attempting NAPLAN on paper and others online.

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.

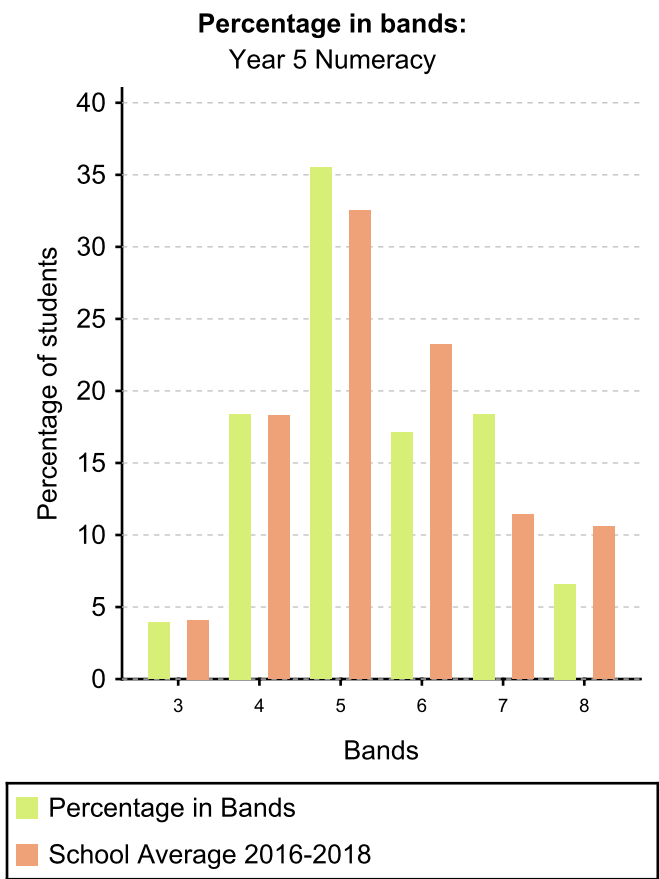
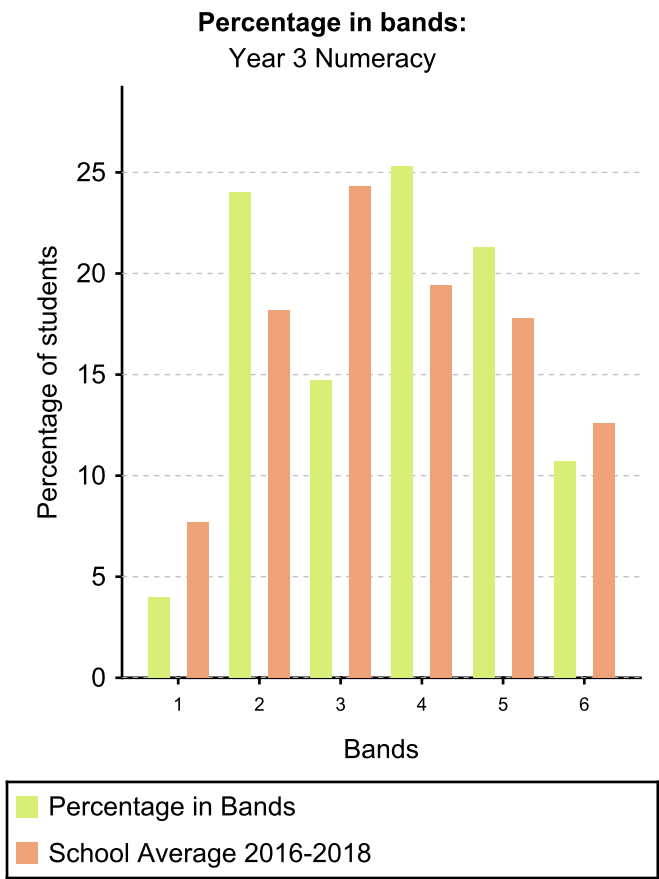
Percentage in bands:
Year 3 Reading



Percentage in bands:
Year 5 Reading



NAPLAN Numeracy results for Years 3 and 5 are featured in the graphs.



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.

As a school, we will continue to focus on explicit teaching and ensure we utilise modelled, guided and independent activities that are differentiated to meet the needs of every student. Staff will continue to focus on data driven student centred learning practices to increase positive outcome growth for all students.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Tell Them From Me Surveys – The Tell Them From Me (TTFM) online surveys were again made available to Years 4 to 6 students, teachers and parents/carers.

A total of 230 students completed the student surveys which included nine measures of student engagement alongside five drivers of student outcomes.

Key findings included:

Over 80% of students indicated they were socially engaged, intellectually engaged and learning at school with these results in line with NSW Government norms.

Only 3–5% of students indicated that they were disengaged with learning compared to NSW Government State norms of 10–12% of students.

Students also indicated that they were receiving quality instruction, had positive teacher–student relations, were in a positive learning environment and had expectations of success.

Only 45 parents responded to the TTFM parent survey this year. Though a slight increase on previous years, it still only represents a small proportion of our parent population..

Parent responses indicated that Birrong Public School was in line with NSW Government State norms for the following areas:

- Parents feel Welcome
- Inclusive School
- Safety at School
- School Support Positive Behaviour
- School Support Learning
- Parent Support Learning at Home
- Parents are Informed

Analysis of the results indicate that future directions for the school may include:

- Scheduling of parent activities to occur when they are available
- Informing parents more frequently about children's social and emotional development.

All classroom teachers completed the online TTFM Teacher Survey. Teachers indicated that we were in line with NSW Government State norms with scores between 7 to 8.5 out of 10 .

The data indicated that teachers with less than 5 years teaching experience compared to teachers with 6 or

more years required some additional support with career development. This will now be a focus of our leadership team in 2019.

High Expectations Authentic Relationships Online Parent Survey – An online High Expectations Authentic Relationships survey was introduced to determine if the community believed the school prioritise and value high expectations with learning and authentic relationships with students and community.

Analysis of this survey feedback demonstrated that 80% or more of our parents and community agreed that Birrong Public School is a place where all students can learn, we focus on the whole child, and we have a long term commitment to our community. This feedback is now also being used to support our planning for 2019.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Aboriginal education has been supported in 2018 by a team of our teachers participating in Aboriginal Education Committee meetings. A representative attended two Bankstown AECG meetings to further strengthen the partnership between the AECG and our school.

As part of NAIDOC week, an exhibition was organised to celebrate and acknowledge the accomplishments of Aboriginal women throughout history to promote the theme 'Because of her, we can!' Students participated in research and art competitions and all entries were displayed in the exhibition. Aboriginal artefacts were sourced from the Henry Parkes Resource Centre to engage students and promote Aboriginal culture and histories. The AECG and wider community were also invited to the exhibition.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

Birrong Public School continues to embrace the cultural diversity of the school community and provides valuable opportunities for an inclusive multicultural education. Respect for all cultures is embedded in the curriculum and school environment. Harmony Day is held to celebrate our culturally diverse society that upholds inclusiveness, respect and belonging.

The school is developing its History and Geography scope and sequences. These will ensure students' perspectives are broadened and cultural diversity is further embraced and fostered within our school.

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

There is a trained Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO)

who is the first contact in dealing with any allegations of racism. Reported incidences of racist behaviour are rare and are always dealt with in accordance to the policy and procedures of the Department of Education. They are recorded and included in school wellbeing and behaviour data. The ARCO's role also involves promoting the values of respect for all races and cultures and our school rules of showing respect, being safe and being a learner help to further support these values.

Other school programs

Environmental Education – Birrong Public School continued to maintain and promote a culture of sustainability in order to achieve best practice in the management of resources within the school community. This year a team of five teachers and approximately fifty students from Years 2 to 6 contributed many achievements. The Veggie Patch was once again in full operation. Our dedicated students had a bumper crop of lettuce, carrots, eggplant, beetroot, peas, tomatoes and strawberries. Worm farm collection which reduces the costs associated with rubbish removal whilst also providing us with fertiliser for our gardens was utilised. Students participated in the Clean Up Australia for Schools program and the building of a living scarecrow continued with support from Selma Fida, a visiting artist from the Casula Powerhouse Art Centre. The structure was covered with a range of succulents with remaining features to be added in 2019.

Choir – Sixteen students were selected from auditions to perform in the combined school choir for Granville's 'Our Spectacular'. This year we had many students try out and perform for the first time. All students participated in 3 full day rehearsals at Granville South Performing Arts High School throughout Terms 1 to 3 and successfully learned and performed 8 songs with the theme 'Fun in the Sun'. The Spectacular Choir also learnt Advance Australia Fair in Dharawal, a local Aboriginal language and performed this for the school's NAIDOC celebrations.

The Spectacular Choir was once again involved in Birrong's creative arts night singing six songs. This year's creative arts night was a sold out event with over 150 community members in attendance. The Spectacular Choir was also joined by other students who showed interest and passion for music to sing two songs from the Our Spectacular repertoire at the school's Presentation Day.

Dance Troupe – A total of 32 students from Years 3–6 participated in Our Spectacular at the Sydney Opera House. The theme was Fun In The Sun. The students danced to *Day-O* and *Jump In The Line*, which are songs by Harry Belafonte the 'King of Calypso'. The performance had both male and female dancers in brightly coloured costumes inspired by the traditional dress of the Caribbean. All the students worked hard and attended two rehearsals a week during their lunchtimes. The final dress rehearsal was a day long event at the Opera House. Students participated in the finale with all the performers including the mass choir singing the song, *I Got Faith*.

The dance troupe also performed at the creative arts night in the school hall. The audience enjoyed being close to the performers and the students were excited to have another chance to perform.

Premier's Reading Challenge (PRC) – This is our 16th year of participating in the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge (PRC) which aims to encourage a love of reading. The PRC is a great opportunity for students to experience quality literature. All students in Years K–2 completed the challenge, having read at least 30 PRC books during shared reading lessons. 140 students from Years 3–6 were successful in completing the Challenge by reading 20 books independently.

Debating – Our debating team worked tirelessly and cooperatively to prepare for, and argue each of the challenging topics in an exceptional manner. They were particularly committed to extensive research and preparation of their speeches. Their strong work ethic paid off with the team achieving great success by progressing to the grand final round of the South West Sydney Debate Competition where they defeated Lidcombe Public School in a challenging debate. This secured Birrong's position as the winners of the competition for the third consecutive year. Congratulations to our 2018 Debating Team members for their outstanding results.

Drama – This year the Drama Club consisted of sixteen talented members from Years 3 – 6. Students attended weekly sessions in the school hall where they engaged in a range of enjoyable and interactive games that focused on enhancing their performance skills. They developed their creativity, teamwork, presentation skills and self-confidence. In Term 3 students began rehearsing for their big end of year performance with an invited audience of family and friends. They performed a series of monologues, short skits and hot seating presentations, which were aligned to the theme 'Super Heroes and Super Villains'. The Creative Arts Night was an enormous success and a sold out event! Congratulations to all students in Birrong's Drama Club!

Band – The Birrong School Band consists of two groups: the senior band and the junior band. The students learn and play either brass instruments or percussion. Sixteen students play in the Senior Band while 15 students train in the Junior Band. Both bands are directed by Mr Forrester and supervised by Mrs Veikoso. The bands practise on Thursdays and perform throughout the year at various events. The Senior Band joined the Mt Pritchard Public School Band to participate in the Engadine Music BandFest 2018. The Birrong and Mt Pritchard Public Schools combined brass band earned a gold award, the highest award, at this event. Birrong's band performed together at the school's Presentation Day.

Sport – Birrong Public School had a very exciting year in sporting events. The school was involved in all three district carnivals; swimming, cross country and athletics. We achieved the following results: 3rd at swimming, 2nd at cross country and 6th at athletics. Students also participated at regional level in all three

carnivals and in district teams for a number of sports including basketball, netball, cricket and soccer. We had one student make the Sydney South West (SSW) soccer team. Winter PSSA was successful for the senior girls' soccer team and junior girls' newcombeball team winning their grand finals. The junior and senior girls' netball teams finished runners up. Success was also achieved during Summer PSSA with the senior girls' basketball team winning its grand final. All students K to 6 also participated in both the Life Skills and Fit Futures programs throughout the year with a total of 175 students from Years 2 to 6 also completing the Department of Education's School Swimming and Water Safety program during Term 4.