

2020 Annual Report

Cowan Public School



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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2020 is provided to the community of Cowan 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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Message from the principal

2020 saw a year like we have never seen before. Bushfires, storms and then COVID 19. Learning from home was a difficult time for all but, I want to say how incredibly resourceful we all were during that time, how we all displayed time management skills, communication skills and most of all resilience. Students of Cowan have grown further, they became more compassionate, kind, aware and smiling students that were seemingly unphased by it all.

It is these traits that make me so incredibly proud to be the Principal of Cowan PS.

During the COVID time, staff evaluated our processes and practices, and engaged in collaboration and professional learning. We researched evidence-based practices and how we could implement this into moving forward once out of restrictions. We concentrated on the departments document 'What Works Best'. We were then able to put some of these practices in place when all the students returned. We will continue into 2021 delivering and improving our practices.

I would like to thank all of the teachers for helping to guide the students through the bumpy ride of 2020. Their understanding, energy and insight has helped shape Cowan PS. We were forced to move our learning goals forward and we embraced technology as a tool to reach out to our students. Thank you to the office and support staff that also play a very important role in the student's life, they have shown compassion and helped in many ways to shape the children's whole school experience. Thank you to our parents/caregivers and families for your support and partnership in the education of your children. We truly could not have accomplished our tasks without the support and dedication of our community.

Kind Regards

Tracey Darby

School vision

Our vision at Cowan Public School is to empower students to become independent, resilient, life-long learners, who are actively engaged, motivated and committed to their community.

Cowan Public School staff and parents work together to enable all students to strive for personal best, experience success and promote individual student growth through a focus on personal effort and positive mindset growth.

It is the belief of the entire school community that by valuing and respecting others, the school engenders a love of community with a vision 'the students will become responsible, caring and successful members of the community'.

School context

Cowan Public School is a small school with a teaching principal and is situated 15 kilometres north of Hornsby set on the outskirts of Muogamarra Nature Reserve and Ku-Ring-Gai Chase National Park. It is a school with quality programs and a school community with high expectations. There are 33 families with a total of 45 students enrolled for 2020.

The school operates with two permanent classes and a Multi-Categorical support class.

Cowan Public School is a focal point in the local community and is well supported by its parent body. The school caters for students from Kindergarten to Year 6. We proudly acknowledge our high standard of student behaviour and achievements. Our students perform exceptionally well in many endeavours and their excellent citizenship is regularly acknowledged by the wider community. The provision of a great variety of learning experiences encourages participation, thinking, creativity and the love of learning.

Our students are taught to do their best, be considerate, tolerant of others, to have personal pride and to be responsible citizens. The school provides a well-rounded education with the development of the 'whole child'. This is seen through its successful academic, performing arts and sport programs.

Self-assessment and school achievement

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 is a statement of what is valued as excellence for NSW public schools, both now and into the future. 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.

Each year, we assess our practice against the Framework to inform our school plan and annual report.

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>

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

Elements	2020 School Assessment
LEARNING: Learning Culture	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Wellbeing	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Curriculum	Delivering
LEARNING: Assessment	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Reporting	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Student performance measures	Delivering
TEACHING: Effective classroom practice	Delivering
TEACHING: Data skills and use	Delivering
TEACHING: Professional standards	Delivering
TEACHING: Learning and development	Delivering
LEADING: Educational leadership	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Delivering
LEADING: School resources	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Sustaining and Growing

Strategic Direction 1

Enhancing Student Learning

Purpose

To enhance student learning through the provision of a balanced, broad range of explicit, meaningful differentiated learning opportunities, creating resilient, goal-orientated, adaptable learners. This will cater for all students' individual needs that is considered, planned and trackable to ensure student success and maximise learning and teaching impact.

Improvement Measures

100% of students can articulate their learning goals.

All teaching programs will indicate specific evidence based strategies to increase the number of students in higher NAPLAN bands. All students will exhibit at least the expected positive growth in NAPLAN results where data indicates a trend over time of improved results in spelling, writing and reading.

All students participate in Student Parliament giving them a voice to contribute to decision making.

Of the students with Learning and Support needs (on NCCD data), fewer will require high levels of adjustment.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Staff develop and share their capacity to provide an extensive range of learning opportunities. Lessons are to be creative, challenging and future focused.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Teachers have improved programs and are working collaboratively in planning and judging assessment tasks together. We are starting to investigate ways to see improvement across the whole school. The teaching staff received professional learning on using PLAN 2. This helped the staff to create Individual Learning Plans for students needing differentiation.	Support for beginning teachers Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)
Teaching staff used creative, challenging and future focused lessons through google classroom and ZOOM.	

Process 2: Build staff capacity to plan and differentiate programming and pedagogy and create grouping structures to support differentiation for both low and high performing students.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Engage in professional learning and improve practice • Staff participated in learning, to update knowledge and practice. The Staff worked through the document 'What Works Best' and reflected on current practices and evaluated their own processes and practices. Staff completed online courses during COVID 19 time. These included: • ADHD - adjustments teachers may make in the classroom to support students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). • Mental Health - common adjustments teachers can make in the classroom to support students who have mental health conditions such as anxiety or depression. • Administration of Medication.	Professional learning

Process 3: Empower students with critical and creative thinking skills through inquiry based learning, opportunities for self-assessment and effective feedback.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Due to COVID 19 the staff had to use very innovative ways to engage the students on ZOOM. Investigation projects were given by the teachers and	N/A - courses online

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

school principal. Feedback was sorted constantly and teachers were not always able to see the process and steps taken through the investigation.	
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Next Steps

Due to COVID 19, we were unable to continue our professional learning in some areas. We will need to implement 'Formative Assessment' Professional Learning into our Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-2024 next year. Some students can articulate their learning goals, and can suggest their area of weakness and strength. The next stage would be for the students to work towards set learning and social goals.

NAPLAN was cancelled this year. No data received on the number of students in higher NAPLAN bands or expected positive growth.

All students participated in Student Parliament (only a couple of times during the year - due to COVID 19) giving them a voice to contribute on decision making to enhance the student learning environment. This will continue in 2021.

Seven of the nine students exited from the MacqLit program. This program will continue in 2021.

Strategic Direction 2

Informed and Collaborative Teaching

Purpose

To improve student outcomes, high quality teaching is vital. Our purpose is to develop engaging, expert teachers who understand the complexities of every student and strive to continually improve their practice to cater for individual needs, within a highly collaborative learning culture.

Improvement Measures

100% of teachers develop, monitor and evaluate their personalised professional learning plan.

All teaching staff demonstrate an intimate knowledge of the school plan and directions. Monitoring of teacher programs provides evidence of differentiated learning which is a must in a school made up of composite classes.

Use of data and classroom observations sheets to show school based observations embedded in the teaching and learning cycle.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: All staff complete PDPs (Performance and Development Plans) that display an understanding of best practice around assessment, data and reporting.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
All staff completed PDPs (Performance and Development Plans) setting future goals to map out individual professional learning. Unfortunately, all original goals were not met due to COVID 19. PDPs had to be adjusted to change with the challenges faced. Due to limited courses online in the area of development needed, we changed our focus to upskill in wellbeing of students. Administration staff completed PDPs (Performance and Development Plans) and were given relief from face to face to participate in professional learning. These courses included 'Understand ADHD', 'Mental Health in the classroom' and 'Administering Medication'.	N/A

Process 2: Professional learning for school staff in the areas of assessment, data collection, evaluation, reporting and informed future focused planning.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Staff attended professional learning by ZOOM on PLAN 2. This software allows the teachers to enter data so they can plan, focus, observe and analyse students' literacy and numeracy needs using the Learning Progressions. This software allows teachers to create individual programs for students according to their needs.	N/A - online course

Process 3: Regular collection of student data across all Key Learning Areas to identify and inform future teaching experiences.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Collection of student data is an ongoing practice that is constantly being refined. In Term 4, the 3-6 teacher trialed 'Essential Assessments'. This software delivers a whole school approach to formative and summative assessment in areas of literacy and numeracy. This software helps with creating personalised and differentiated learning plans and offers strategies/worksheets to assist with learning.	N/A

Next Steps

All teaching staff evaluated the previous school plan and were surveyed to form the next strategic directions for the new 'Strategic Improvement Plan'.

Next year, we will purchase a subscription of 'Essential Assessments' and 'Inquisitive', to assist teachers in data collection, effective teaching and engaged learning.

Strategic Direction 3

Developing and Enhancing Community Communication

Purpose

To enhance and develop positive and effective communication practices between school and community.

Improvement Measures

Parents and teacher communication indicate parents have a greater understanding of school programs and new syllabus requirements.

Families and the school share responsibility for student learning and wellbeing through building parent capacity to support learning at home, and improved communication.

Keeping parents informed of all school events and maintaining attendance rates of at least 25% of families at P&C meetings and at least 90% of families at community events and fundraisers.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Staff, students, parents and the community understand core values of being respectful, responsible and aspiring learners who have high expectations of themselves and show empathy for others and value diversity.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>Our Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) is an educational process that brings together the whole-school community to contribute to developing a positive, safe and supportive learning culture. The PBL is published in our newsletter fortnightly to help parents reinforce at home.</p> <p>Having a focus of common PBL language at school and at home can benefit the school community by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reduced problem behaviour• increased time focused on instruction• improved social-emotional wellbeing• positive and respectful relationships among students and staff• better support for teachers to teach, model and respond effectively to student needs• a predictable learning environment where staff and students know what is expected to deliver effective practices that can be sustained over time.	N/A

Process 2: Develop communication strategies to provide information for parents using a variety of digital media, about student learning achievements and how to support the learning of their children.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Our communication strategies were enhanced during COVID 19. Parents were able to attend ZOOM meetings where their child's learning activity was explained in detailed.	N/A

Process 3: Enhance a sense of community and continue to build relationships and strengthen a culture of trust and shared responsibility.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Constant communication was enhanced during COVID 19. The teachers and the principal were constantly checking on the wellbeing of the student as well as the parents/carers. Staff were dropping items off at the students doorstep or sending items of work through the mail. Parents/caregivers felt supported during this time and appreciated the level of support given.	N/A

Next Steps

In 2021, parents will be introduced to the new syllabus changes both in English and Mathematics.

A focus for 2021 is to present focus learning groups for parent/caregivers; teaching the strategies used in the classrooms.

2021 will see our calendar go live on our website as well as newsletter be uploaded to SkoolBag.

Essential Assessment and PLAN 2 will be able to help the school to communicate student's learning achievements and where to next support. This will be a focus in our Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-2024.

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
Aboriginal background loading	Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal background loading (\$990.00) 	Collaboration Artwork with Garry Purchase <p>The students all contributed to two art pieces with Garry Purchase.</p> <p>The students appreciated having a famous artist to work on a masterpiece that provided meaning to the students of Cowan. The students developed a story to illustrate.</p> <p>One picture represents day in the hills of Cowan and the other night.</p> <p>Aboriginal perspectives in programs are verified by lesson observations and regular program checks across the academic year.</p>
English language proficiency	Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English language proficiency (\$3 783.00) 	<p>Students from non-English speaking backgrounds formed 22% of the school population. The school principal was released off class to support students from language backgrounds other than English in our school to help teachers form individual learning programs if needed.</p>
Low level adjustment for disability	<p>Resources purchased and utilised in all rooms include visual, sensory products, toys, pencil grips and occupational therapy equipment etc.</p> Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low level adjustment for disability (\$31 174.00) 	<p>Principal to do Learning Support role. MacqLit lessons four days a week.</p> <p>SLSOs employed to work with identified students.</p> <p>Teaching staff regularly review student needs and their progress. Students with low level support needs engage with a school learning and support officer (SLSO) within the classroom in small groups. Our funds have primarily been used to support students within the classroom setting to assist with group work, one-on-one assistance, resource preparation and monitoring of health care needs.</p> <p>Time was also used to support the new support unit.</p>
Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)	Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS) (\$8 204.00) 	<p>These included team teaching, lesson observations, collaborative planning, demonstration lessons, assessment time and more. Teachers felt that these initiatives have enhanced their teaching practice and student outcomes.</p>
Socio-economic background	Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socio-economic background (\$2 993.00) 	<p>The available funds have been used to ensure all students are not disadvantaged in any way. The results are that each and every student will have equal opportunities for their learning.</p>
Support for beginning teachers	Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for beginning teachers (\$10 000.00) 	<p>Ongoing support was given to teachers in their early years of teaching. Two teachers received funding to allow for additional release. These teachers were able to plan, program, report, work with their mentor and attend professional learning opportunities. Some funding was rolled over to 2021, as not</p>

Support for beginning teachers	Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for beginning teachers (\$10 000.00) 	many opportunities for face to face professional learning was available during this year.
Targeted student support for refugees and new arrivals	Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted support for refugees and new arrivals (\$0.00) 	Student did not stay due to COVID 19 - Funding returned to department.

Student information

Student enrolment profile

	Enrolments			
Students	2017	2018	2019	2020
Boys	34	30	25	25
Girls	16	20	18	20

Student attendance profile

School				
Year	2017	2018	2019	2020
K	96.6	96	99.3	98
1	91.7	98.5	91.1	93.7
2	92.5	96.8	99.3	93.6
3	97.8	96.9	95.8	92.8
4	90.3	98.4	96.3	93.9
5	96.5	97.6	97.4	91.4
6	96.8	95.6	91.1	95.5
All Years	94.5	97.1	94.7	94.7
State DoE				
Year	2017	2018	2019	2020
K	94.4	93.8	93.1	92.4
1	93.8	93.4	92.7	91.7
2	94	93.5	93	92
3	94.1	93.6	93	92.1
4	93.9	93.4	92.9	92
5	93.8	93.2	92.8	92
6	93.3	92.5	92.1	91.8
All Years	93.9	93.4	92.8	92

NSW student attendance data in 2020 is not comparable to previous years due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSW Government encouraged students to learn from home, where possible, for a seven week period from 24 March to 22 May. During this period, schools monitored engagement with learning to determine whether students were marked present. This changed the attendance measure. There was also some evidence of varied marking practices as schools adjusted to the learning from home period, with some schools recording higher attendance rates while others recording markedly lower rates.

Management of non-attendance

Attendance at school has a big impact on longer term outcomes for children and young people. When a child is not at school they miss important opportunities to learn, build friendships and develop their skills through play. Regular attendance at school is a shared responsibility between schools and parents. By working together we can have a positive effect on supporting our children and young people to regularly attend school.

Our teachers promote and monitor regular attendance at school and all our schools have effective measures in place to record attendance and follow up student absences promptly. They are guided by the School Attendance policy which details the management of non-attendance.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal(s)	1
Classroom Teacher(s)	2.41
Learning and Support Teacher(s)	0.2
Teacher Librarian	0.08
School Administration and Support Staff	2.1

*Full Time Equivalent

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce composition

The Department actively supports the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees through the use of identified positions, and scholarship opportunities to become a teacher and by providing a culturally safe workplace. As of 2020, 3.7% of the Department's overall workforce identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People.

Workforce ATSI

Staff type	Benchmark ¹	2020 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation ²
School Support	3.30%	6.30%
Teachers	3.30%	2.80%

Note 1 - The NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2014-17 introduced an aspirational target of 1.8% by 2021 for each of the sector's salary bands. If the aspirational target of 1.8% is achieved in salary bands not currently at or above 1.8%, the cumulative representation of Aboriginal employees in the sector is expected to reach 3.3%.

Note 2 - Representation of diversity groups are calculated as the estimated number of staff in each group divided by the total number of staff. These statistics have been weighted to estimate the representation of diversity groups in the workforce, where diversity survey response rates were less than 100 per cent. The total number of staff is based on a headcount of permanent and temporary employees.

Teacher qualifications

All casual, temporary and permanent teachers in NSW public schools must hold a NSW Department of Education approval to teach. Teachers with approval to teach must be accredited with the NSW Education Standards Authority, and hold a recognised teaching degree. All NSW teachers must hold a valid NSW Working With Children Check clearance.

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Professional learning is core to enabling staff to improve their practice. Professional learning includes five student-free School Development Days and induction programs for staff new to our school and/or system. These days are used to improve the capacity of teaching and non-teaching staff in line with school and Departmental priorities.

In 2020, an additional School Development Day was included at the start of Term 2 to assist school leaders, teachers and support staff to focus on the wellbeing of students and continuity of education, such as online and remote learning.

Financial information

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020. The Principal is responsible for the financial management of the school and ensuring all school funds are managed in line with Department policy requirements.

	2020 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	201,256
Revenue	973,297
Appropriation	868,019
Sale of Goods and Services	450
Grants and contributions	104,016
Investment income	310
Other revenue	503
Expenses	-947,781
Employee related	-805,746
Operating expenses	-142,035
Surplus / deficit for the year	25,517
Closing Balance	226,772

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.

Financial summary - Equity loadings

The equity loading data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' line item of the financial summary above.

	2020 Approved SBA (\$)
Targeted Total	65,567
Equity Total	39,607
Equity - Aboriginal	1,656
Equity - Socio-economic	2,993
Equity - Language	3,783
Equity - Disability	31,174
Base Total	695,742
Base - Per Capita	10,342
Base - Location	0
Base - Other	685,400
Other Total	23,738
Grand Total	824,653

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.

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.

The My School website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing. Go to myschool.edu.au to access the school data.

2020 NAPLAN

As agreed by the Education Council, the National Assessment Program (or NAPLAN) did not proceed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was to assist school leaders, teachers and support staff to focus on the wellbeing of students and continuity of education, such as online and remote learning.

The Education Council also agreed to defer the full transition to NAPLAN Online from 2021 to 2022 and the continuation of current NAPLAN governance arrangements through 2021.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Student surveys

The students were interviewed by our year six students and were asked to respond to the following elements. The younger students were provided with examples to help with their understanding of the questions.

Knowing what is expected from the teacher - 88% said yes.

Identifying a staff member for advice and assistance - 92% said yes.

Knowing what is expected of them with behaviour - 88% said yes.

Do the students set learning goals - 69% said yes. Most of the 'no' answers were Kindergarten.

Teachers share how the work is going to be assessed/ what teachers are looking for - 73% said yes. Most of the 'no' answers were Kindergarten.

Teacher gives them feedback on how to improve - 73% said yes. Half of the 'no' answers were Kindergarten.

Teacher surveys

The teachers were surveyed using the departments 'What Works Best' document. The document asks questions on eight topics. These include; high expectation, explicit teaching, effective feedback, use of data to inform practice, assessment, classroom management, wellbeing and collaboration. After calculating the results, teachers reported that they would like more professional learning or time for the following areas.

1. *Use of data to inform practice* - Quantitate and recording/tracking of data.
2. *Assessment* - Formative and Summative assessments, questioning, and clear targets/goals.
3. *Collaboration* - Developing a working relationship with all staff, see what other schools are doing, showcase work and resources and education resource providers to come to the school.

Community Survey

A limited number of parents and community members participated in the Tell Then From Me survey.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the school plays a central role in the local community and that all seemed happy with the schools direction, however there is the potential to build stronger partnerships and increase community engagement in and with the school to support student improvement, once COVID restrictions are eased..

The implementation of SkoolBag app has been appreciated. The 'School Newsletter' will be moved to this format in 2021.

The parent/caregiver survey concluded that calendar dates can be improved on, as well as what is happening in the classroom by the term.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal Education Policy

The responsibility for enacting the Aboriginal Education Policy rests with all Departmental staff. The policy should underpin and inform planning, teaching practice and approaches to educational leadership in all educational settings.

Evidence of effective implementation of the policy included:

- Establishing, building and strengthening relationships with the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Aboriginal people and communities.
- Providing, in partnership with Aboriginal people and communities, education which promotes quality teaching, is engaging, and is culturally appropriate and relevant.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will match or better the outcomes of the broader student population.
- Implementation of Personalised Learning Pathways for all Aboriginal students in a school culture of high expectations.

Anti-Racism Policy

All teachers are responsible for supporting students to develop an understanding of racism and discrimination and the impact these may have on individuals and the broader community. Principals are responsible for examining school practices and procedures to ensure they are consistent with the policy. All schools have an Anti-Racism Contact Officer who is trained to respond to concerns in relation to racism.

Multicultural Education Policy

Teachers address the specific learning and wellbeing needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds through their teaching and learning programs. Principals are responsible for ensuring that school policies, programs and practices respond to the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the school community, and provide opportunities that enable all students to achieve equitable education and social outcomes.