

2023 Annual Report

Lowesdale Public School



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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2023 is provided to the community of Lowesdale 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 Strategic Improvement 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.

School contact details

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School vision

Lowesdale Public School students achieve their emotional, physical and academic potential through engaging learning experiences in our supportive and well-resourced environment. They learn critical thinking, communication, creativity, collaboration and resilience, developing as productive community members.

School context

Lowesdale Public School is a small rural school located 18km north of Corowa on the Riverina Highway. The school is surrounded by farming land. In 2022 there are 12 students from 8 families.

The school provides 'Quality Education in a Rural Environment'. Learning programs are individualised to suit the learning needs of individual students within a safe, happy school environment. Students are encouraged to become responsible and enquiring learners. There is a strong partnership between parents and school staff to support the wellbeing and development of each child.

The school has a family-orientated atmosphere and strong sense of community. The school fosters a culture of high expectations and high levels of community engagement. The students have varied extra- curricular opportunities and daily access to technology.

Lowesdale Public School is part of the Bpangerang Learning Community which incorporates schools from Corowa and Mulwala.

The wellbeing and engagement of our students remains a priority. Continued engagement with the Wellbeing Framework Self-assessment Tool will provide clarity around where our school needs to focus in developing whole-school processes to support every student being known, valued and cared for.

Based on the outcome of our Situational Analysis, we have determined that we need to continue to develop our formative and summative assessment practices across the curriculum. Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) will continue to be written for each student to promote learning and wellbeing growth as well as self-directed learning. Clear processes will be put in place to support students with additional learning needs, including high potential and gifted students. Teachers will evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching practices.

Planning, programming, assessment and using data for teaching and learning are areas of ongoing improvement. The school will develop systems to monitor and review its curriculum provision to meet changing requirements of the students. There will be a focus on ensuring teaching and learning programs are explicit and engaging as well as meeting all requirements of the Department of Education and the NSW Education Standards Authority. The monitoring of student performance data will determine areas of need at an individual and whole-school level to ensure ongoing student and school improvement.

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 and participated in an external validation. 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 Strategic Improvement Plan and annual report. Every four years, our school undergoes an external validation process.

During the external validation process, an independent panel consisting of a Principal, School Leadership and a peer principal considered our evidence and assessment of our school's progress against the School Excellence Framework.

Our self-assessment and the external validation process will assist the school to refine our Strategic Improvement 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/school-excellence>

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

Elements	2023 School Assessment
LEARNING: Learning Culture	Delivering
LEARNING: Wellbeing	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Curriculum	Delivering
LEARNING: Assessment	Delivering
LEARNING: Reporting	Delivering
LEARNING: Student growth and performance	Delivering
TEACHING: Effective classroom practice	Delivering
TEACHING: Data skills and use	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Professional standards	Delivering
TEACHING: Learning and development	Delivering
LEADING: Educational leadership	Delivering
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Delivering
LEADING: School resources	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Delivering

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

Purpose

In order to maximise student learning outcomes in reading and numeracy, we will further develop and refine data driven teaching practices that are responsive to the learning needs of individual students.

Initiatives

This year our school implemented the following initiatives to support the realisation of the four year Strategic Improvement Plan and the achievement of system-negotiated and school-determined targets.

- Provide rich contextual learning in Reading.
- Specific data analysis used to inform teaching.
- Provide rich contextual learning in Numeracy.

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

Summary of progress

During 2023 teachers engaged in professional learning led by vAPCI in data analysis and explicit teaching of vocabulary. Teachers observed modelled lessons, gradually taking control of planning and delivery to provide targeted vocabulary lessons. Teachers also collaborated to review assessment and data analysis to ensure focused teaching.

The school benefited from working closely with the Virtual Assistant Principal Curriculum & Instruction (vAPCI), appointed term one, 2023. Engagement with the CSUS program assisted in identifying areas of focus and developing a quality literacy block.

Literacy was the major focus on 2023. Teachers applied vocabulary teaching skills to teaching specific vocabulary in numeracy and other KLAs. Scheduling regular data meetings did not always occur, a different meeting structure is being planned in 2024.

Staff are displaying greater confidence in the use of PLAN2, both entering observations and collating data for analysis. Staff are confidently teaching targeted lessons and engaging in feedback process with the teaching principal and the vAPCI. There is increased use of DoE assessments that link to PLAN2 (eg IfSR-PV)

Specific data analysis is being used in selected focus areas in Literacy, this will be embedded into Literacy planning and introduced into Numeracy planning in 2024.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

The annual progress measures indicate the expected annual level of achievement for each improvement measure, aligned to the initiatives, in the Strategic Improvement Plan. Schools evaluate their achievement against annual progress measures to determine progress and inform future planning.

Annual progress measure	Progress towards achievement
Increase or maintain student attendance rate at 96% across K-6.	The number of students attending school 90% of the time or more has increased, with overall attendance increasing from 90% in 2022 to 94.6% in 2023.
Increased percentage of students demonstrate growth and achievement in vocabulary over the year, using the learning progressions.	All students have demonstrated growth in the Vocabulary in 2023, as shown in PLAN2 Understanding Text learning progressions.
An increased proportion of students in year 3 and 5 have demonstrated growth and achievement in number sense and place value, using the learning progressions.	Year 3 and 5 students have demonstrated growth in number sense and place value, as measured by Interview for Student Reasoning - Place Value, recorded on PLAN2.

Strategic Direction 2: Explicit teaching and reporting through evidence-based practices

Purpose

School self-assessment has identified the need to improve staff capability to plan, teach, monitor and report on quality differentiated learning experiences across K-6.

Initiatives

This year our school implemented the following initiatives to support the realisation of the four year Strategic Improvement Plan and the achievement of system-negotiated and school-determined targets.

- 'What Works Best' - evidence based best practice
- Building Staff Capability through Collaboration
- Curriculum

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

Summary of progress

The new staff in 2023 engaged with the What Works Best online modules, in order to implement evidence-based best practices. There was a focus on effective use of learning intentions and success criteria which, while used effectively in some learning areas, are not yet embedded in all KLAs. In 2024 staff will continue to develop this area.

Staff have been receptive to changes in practice and have engaged in targeted professional learning, both self-paced and delivered by vAPCI. Staff were able to collaborate in professional learning with staff from Rand Public School, resulting in sharing of expertise and experience, as well as building network connections. Teachers are keen to further develop shared professional learning, with clear links to changes in practice and improved student outcomes. Staff are engaging in collaborative data discussions, and these will be prioritised at meetings in 2024. Learning spaces have been arranged and equipped to facilitate student engagement in learning. Resources have been selected for use with updated curriculum outcomes, for example a range of decodable texts have been purchased and are in use for the explicit teaching of phonics.

New staff in 2023 have engaged with the What Works Best Modules as well as continuing to complete the online Curriculum Reform modules.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

The annual progress measures indicate the expected annual level of achievement for each improvement measure, aligned to the initiatives, in the Strategic Improvement Plan. Schools evaluate their achievement against annual progress measures to determine progress and inform future planning.

Annual progress measure	Progress towards achievement
The school will self assess itself as sustaining and growing in the element of Effective Classroom Practice in the School Excellence Framework.	Within the element of Effective Classroom Practice, the school has assessed itself as Delivering in the themes of lesson planning and explicit teaching. Professional learning and observations are ongoing to improve practice in these areas. In the themes of feedback and classroom management the school has assessed itself at sustaining and growing.
The school will self assess itself as sustaining and growing in the element of Learning & Development in the School Excellence Framework.	Although the school self-assessed at Delivering in the element of Learning and Development, during External Validation the panel assessed the school at Sustaining and Growing in this area.
The school will self assess itself as sustaining and growing in the element of Curriculum in the School Excellence Framework.	The school has self assessed itself as delivering in the element of Curriculum. The school is moving to digital single program format that all staff contribute to to plan teaching learning sequences, write observations on during teaching and learning sequences and register and evaluate for evidence of learning.

Funding sources	Impact achieved this year
Professional learning \$5,350.99	<p>Professional learning funding is provided to enable all staff to engage in a cycle of continuous professional learning aligned with the requirement of the Professional Learning for Teachers and School Staff Policy at Lowesdale Public School.</p> <p>Funds have been targeted to provide additional support to students enabling initiatives in the school's strategic improvement plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other funded activities <p>Overview of activities partially or fully funded with this initiative funding include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Principal to attend Small Schools Conference. • course costs for staff undertaking recognised courses • presentations by suitable and qualified facilitators, for example diabetes or first aid workshops • teacher relief for staff engaging in professional learning <p>The allocation of this funding has resulted in the following impact: Teaching Principal has increased skills and confidence in the areas of effective use of data, contextual teaching for reading and use of number talks and number sense routines. Learning Support Teacher has utilised explicit teaching of phonics skills in leading the planning for ES1/S1 phonics instruction. The teacher who has completed Austswim accreditation will be able to lead the annual school swimming program with minimal disruption to school routines or cost to families.</p> <p>After evaluation, the next steps to support our students will be: to embed effective data analysis into collaborative planning in Literacy and Numeracy. Phonics will be taught by all staff using explicit teaching techniques, as guided by the LST's professional learning. School Swimming and water safety will be taught to all students.</p>
Socio-economic background \$7,523.52	<p>Socio-economic background equity loading is used to meet the additional learning needs of students at Lowesdale Public School who may be experiencing educational disadvantage as a result of their socio-economic background.</p> <p>Funds have been targeted to provide additional support to students enabling initiatives in the school's strategic improvement plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other funded activities <p>Overview of activities partially or fully funded with this equity loading include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding additional teacher time, to make a full time position, to provide consistency and continuity of teaching and learning. • employment of additional staff to support small group and Centre for Effective Reading program implementation. <p>The allocation of this funding has resulted in the following impact: Teaching is structured in small groups, with support available to students to enable more focussed learning. With SLSO support, targeted students are completing Individual reading programs to address areas of difficulty. Student reading ability has improved, as well confidence in their learning.</p> <p>After evaluation, the next steps to support our students will be: to continue to provide targeted literacy support, to enhance students' literacy skills in all KLAs. Teachers will refine individual reading programs to ensure support is meeting current learning needs.</p>
Low level adjustment for disability \$18,962.47	<p>Low level adjustment for disability equity loading provides support for students at Lowesdale Public School in mainstream classes who have a disability or additional learning and support needs requiring an adjustment to</p>

<p>Low level adjustment for disability</p> <p>\$18,962.47</p>	<p>their learning.</p> <p>Funds have been targeted to provide additional support to students enabling initiatives in the school's strategic improvement plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other funded activities <p>Overview of activities partially or fully funded with this equity loading include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing support for targeted students within the classroom through the employment of School Learning and Support Officers • employment of additional staff to support teachers to differentiate the curriculum and develop resources and classroom activities resulting in improvement for students with additional learning needs <p>The allocation of this funding has resulted in the following impact: The school had 2 full time teachers in 2023, enabling K-2 and 3-6 to be taught separately for the majority of Literacy and Numeracy lessons. Teachers were able to differentiate teaching and provide a high level of individualisation for all students. SLSO support was allocated to address particular needs, while ensuring students felt that SLSO time was allocated to all.</p> <p>After evaluation, the next steps to support our students will be: Ensure that collaboratively planned, differentiated lessons are taught to maximise student growth in Literacy and Numeracy. SLSO support will continue to be provided to students with low-level disability to ensure maximum participation and achievement in learning.</p>
<p>Location</p> <p>\$1,933.90</p>	<p>The location funding allocation is provided to Lowesdale Public School to address school needs associated with remoteness and/or isolation.</p> <p>Funds have been targeted to provide additional support to students enabling initiatives in the school's strategic improvement plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other funded activities <p>Overview of activities partially or fully funded with this operational funding include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subsidising student excursions to enable all students to participate • additional staffing for teaching principal release • student assistance to support excursions <p>The allocation of this funding has resulted in the following impact: All students were able to participate in all available excursions, with minimal or no payment required. The school was able to maintain sufficient staffing during variations to routine.</p> <p>After evaluation, the next steps to support our students will be: Plan and provide excursions and activities that provide students with a range of activities that they may otherwise not be able to access.</p>
<p>QTSS release</p> <p>\$2,012.26</p>	<p>The quality teaching, successful students (QTSS) allocation is provided to improve teacher quality and enhance professional practice at Lowesdale Public School.</p> <p>Funds have been targeted to provide additional support to students enabling initiatives in the school's strategic improvement plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other funded activities <p>Overview of activities partially or fully funded with this initiative funding include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Releasing teachers to meet with vAPCI to co-plan teaching and review demonstration lessons. <p>The allocation of this funding has resulted in the following impact: Teachers have been able to share expertise and collaboratively plan</p>

<p>QTSS release</p> <p>\$2,012.26</p>	<p>teaching sprints. Teachers have reflected on teaching and planned future directions.</p> <p>After evaluation, the next steps to support our students will be: Using insights gained to plan further focused teaching sprints.</p>
<p>COVID ILSP</p> <p>\$11,741.49</p>	<p>The purpose of the COVID intensive learning support program is to deliver intensive small group tuition for students who have been disadvantaged by the move to remote and/or flexible learning and were identified by their school as most likely to benefit from additional support in 2023.</p> <p>Funds have been targeted to provide additional support to students enabling initiatives in the school's strategic improvement plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other funded activities <p>Overview of activities partially or fully funded with this targeted funding include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employment of teachers/educators to deliver small group tuition <p>The allocation of this funding has resulted in the following impact: The school was able to provide targeted individual reading instruction for identified students. These students were able to work towards the expected level of reading ability for their year group.</p> <p>After evaluation, the next steps to support our students will be: Continue individual or small group reading to ensure that students' growth in this areas is maintained.</p>

Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Boys	8	8	7	4
Girls	6	5	5	5

Student attendance profile

School				
Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
K	93.6		80.3	87.9
1	97.9	93.5		92.1
2	96.1	94.1		
3		98.1	94.4	100.0
4	94.7		92.6	97.9
5	95.5	94.6		93.7
6	93.7	100.0	90.1	
All Years	95.4	96.6	91.0	93.9
State DoE				
Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
K	92.4		87.9	91.1
1	91.7	92.7		90.5
2	92.0	92.6		
3		92.7	87.6	90.9
4	92.0		87.4	90.6
5	92.0	92.1		90.3
6	91.8	91.5	86.3	
All Years	92.0	92.3	87.3	90.7

Attendance

NSW student attendance data in 2020 is not comparable to other 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 2020. 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.

Attendance figures from 2021 were calculated differently to align with the third edition of ACARA's National Standards for Student Attendance Data and Reporting. Changes include treating partial absences over 120 minutes as a half day absence (instead of their actual value, calculated as a proportion of a nominal 6-hour day) and covers all weeks during Semester 1. Prior to 2021, the final week of Term 2 was excluded.

Furthermore, the department implemented an automated attendance feed (AAF) system in Semester 1 2021. AAF transfers data automatically from third-party attendance management systems to the department's centralised data warehouse every night. The AAF significantly improved data quality in 2021, which has affected data comparability with previous years.

Although there were no state-wide or regional lockdowns in NSW during Semester 1 2021, COVID-19 continued to affect student attendance. Analysis of attendance codes showed a change in the structure of absence reasons in 2021.

Although there were no state-wide or regional lockdowns in NSW during Semester 1 2022, student attendance was impacted by a range of factors:

- * Families evacuating and relocating due to NSW floods
- * Sick students staying at home until a negative COVID-19 test was returned
- * Household members testing positive to COVID-19
- * The easing of COVID-19 border controls at the beginning of 2022 which allowed families to travel inter-state and overseas.

While there were no lockdowns or learning from home periods in Semester 1 2023, there was still a high prevalence of sick attendance codes as students were encouraged to stay home if they were even slightly unwell. Advice for families were still in place, recommending students and staff to stay home when sick and only returning to school when they were symptom free. (See <https://education.nsw.gov.au/schooling/covid-19/advice-for-families> for advice).

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
Assistant Principal(s)	0.2
Classroom Teacher(s)	0.56
Learning and Support Teacher(s)	0.1
Teacher Librarian	0.08
School Administration and Support Staff	0.68

*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 2023, 2.5% of the department's overall workforce identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school workforce composition

Staff type	Benchmark ¹	2023 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation ²
School Support	3.00%	3.60%
Teachers	3.00%	3.40%

Note 1: The NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2019-2025 takes a career pathway approach in that it sets an ambitious target of 3% Aboriginal employment at each non-executive grade of the public sector by 2025.

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.

Financial information

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023. The Principal is responsible for the financial management of the school and ensuring all school funds are managed in line with department policy requirements.

	2023 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	63,395.49
Revenue	439,017.96
Appropriation	432,906.33
Grants and contributions	4,976.35
Investment income	1,135.28
Expenses	-434,983.68
Employee related	-402,664.30
Operating expenses	-32,319.38
Surplus / deficit for the year	4,034.28
Closing Balance	67,429.77

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.

	2023 SBAR Adjustments (\$)
Targeted Total	0
Equity Total	26,486
Equity - Aboriginal	0
Equity - Socio-economic	7,524
Equity - Language	0
Equity - Disability	18,962
Base Total	369,813
Base - Per Capita	3,123
Base - Location	1,934
Base - Other	364,756
Other Total	42,991
Grand Total	439,290

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

The National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

From 2023, student achievement in NAPLAN is reported against 4 levels of proficiency (<https://www.nap.edu.au/naplan/results-and-reports/proficiency-level-descriptions>). These measure student progress against challenging yet reasonable expectations based on the Australian curriculum. They replace the previous numerical NAPLAN bands and national minimum standards.

In addition to the shift to proficiency standards, the NAPLAN testing window moved up from May to March and the scale was reset. As such, NAPLAN scaled scores from 2023 and onwards cannot be compared to NAPLAN results prior to 2023.

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.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Lowesdale Public School is too small to utilise the Tell Them From Me survey. All staff, students and parents were given the opportunity to respond to a survey regarding satisfaction with Lowesdale Public School in 2023. All staff reported a high level of satisfaction and wish to remain at LPS in 2024 and beyond. Staff felt the Literacy focus with the Assistant Principal (Curriculum and Instruction) and Collaborative Support - Unique Settings team increased their capability with curriculum reform.

Parent responses indicated satisfaction with school staffing and resources. Favourable comments were made regarding Lowesdale's interaction with other schools, especially the proposed network with Rand and Brocklesby Public Schools. Parents felt that staff were approachable for addressing concerns.

Students indicated high levels of satisfaction with the school and that their learning was valued and encouraged.

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

Multicultural Education Policy

Teachers are responsible for addressing the specific learning and wellbeing needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds through their teaching and learning programs. The Principal is 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.