

2010 Annual School Report Stewart House School

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way



Education
& Training



Messages

Principal's message

It is with great pleasure that I am returning to Stewart House as principal for another period of four years following success at merit selection at the completion of my tenure in 2010. Hopefully my reappointment will set an example for classroom teachers to reapply as we have half the teaching staff due to transfer at the end of 2011. The loss of one third of all staff each year is a drain on the resources and programs offered by the school. This constant change has in the past prevented the establishment and continuity of new programs to address the students' needs.

During 2010 we focussed on a range of issues including; the continual improvement of programs to better meet student needs, the measurement of outcomes, communication of Stewart House programs to a wider audience and playground improvements.

Teachers continuously review and revise the social and emotional skills lessons and introduce new, more engaging activities. Staff share new ideas with their peers to enable the program to be responsive to the students in the group.

During the year with the social skills programs embedded into the 12 day program, it became evident that a presentation was needed to communicate the change in the school's focus towards teaching skills to groups in the community. This presentation was trialled and presented to several community groups and to teachers by videoconference. It was a very successful initiative in promoting the educational focus of the school.

The playground improvement program dominated our time as it was evident that all shade structures needed replacement and the shade area for the deck constructed under Investing in Our Schools was incomplete. Two shade structures blew away leaving one torn remnant over the playground equipment. Fortunately we were given funding of \$100,000 through the "Premier's Sporting Challenge Upgrade to School Sport Facilities" which enabled us to replace all shade structures as well as complete the awning over the deck.

We have also been successful in gaining \$50,000 under the "National Solar Schools Program" for a lighting upgrade and solar panels on the roof, a DCCW Grant of \$16,000 for a rainwater tank. We have applied for a \$40,000 grant for an outdoor kitchen and kitchen garden. The outdoor kitchen was part of the Investing in our Schools proposal but the lack of funds precluded this from being built. Planning these developments is an exciting prospect for 2011.



Roof completed to provide shade for lunch area on deck



Shade structures and replacement playground surface built during 2010



Outdoor learning area and bush tucker garden

All three executive positions, Teaching and Non Teaching Assistant Principals and Principal became vacant during the year and have been filled with experienced staff with postgraduate qualifications in the education of students with behavioural and emotional difficulties. Roy Goodenough was appointed to the Assistant Principal Non Teaching position and Vanessa Murphy to the Assistant Principal Teaching.



Roy Goodenough



Students at Sydney Airport for a mystery flight over Sydney



Vanessa Murphy

The grounds were further enhanced by an outdoor learning area and bush tucker garden completed through generous contributions of labour and materials from Bunnings at Belrose as part of the Bunnings 'Community Involvement' initiative. Bunnings contribution enabled school funds provided by the grant NSW Environmental Trust to be spent on seating for the students.

The students attending Stewart House have enjoyed a wide range of experiences due to the generosity of agencies that provided access to their facilities at no cost. We appreciate the support of Taronga Zoological Gardens, the Museums in Sydney, NSW Ferries, Wildlife World and the Aquarium at Darling Harbour, indoor pools in the city and suburbs and the IMAX Theatre.

We have ongoing support from the ladies of Variety for the beauty and hair styling visits and the excursions they offer during the year. Agencies in the local area including Jane's Academy of Dance, Fitness First Mona Vale and Surf Lifesaving Australia provide weekly sessions for students to greatly enhance our programs.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school's achievements and areas for development.

Marilyn Bourne

School context

Student information

Approximately 1800 students attend Stewart House each year from public schools across NSW and the ACT, selected by principals as being in need of respite care due to family breakdown, school or family crisis and social or geographic isolation. Each of the 18 groups in 2010 comprised 90-95 students, aged from five to sixteen years. 2010 was the first year of the two year trial of the reallocation of numbers according to the population and level of disadvantage of the School Education Groups.

The reduced number of mainstream groups in 2010 was due to public holidays falling within the two week cycle resulting in the need for four one week groups. The single weeks were offered to students in special education classes with 240 students attending during the year. Numbers in these groups are limited to 60 students to allow surplus beds in the dormitory to accommodate the support staff. Despite this marked increase in special education students we were unable to fill the demand for places. Unfortunately in 2011 there is only one special education group which will be filled from the waiting list for 2010.



Students in the special education group at Stewart House

The majority of students attending (67%) are aged from 9 to 12 years of age, a similar ratio to previous years.

Student enrolment profile 2010 (Mainstream)

AGE	Females	Males
5 years	5	1
6 years	9	15
7 years	26	38
8 years	55	59
9 years	93	104
10 years	136	144
11 years	167	191
12 years	121	136
13 years	96	77
14 years	42	32
15 years	29	29
>16 years	6	10
Total	785	836

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies. Information provided by home schools and parents/ carers is summarised so that staff are aware of and can accommodate the stressors in individual children's backgrounds.

Class sizes

Structure of classes

Classes are formed prior to the students' arrival and are generally age based, composite classes. The age range of the classes differs for each group with one class being K-2, three classes Years 3-6 and two classes Years 7-10. The school is organised in a primary school structure

with a home room and the same class teacher for the 9 days. This stability reduces students' anxiety and assists students to feel accepted in that they feel secure within the same classroom and interact confidently in a stable and consistent social group.

Staff information

Teachers are drawn from primary, secondary and special education with a range of skills and experiences, in Student Welfare, Visual Arts, PD/H/PE and Technology. Teachers share a common interest in teaching children with welfare and behavioural needs and are proactive and flexible, catering for individual students.

The teaching staff remained a stable group with a secondary Art teacher, Telly Tuita appointed in 2010 and a retired secondary deputy, Liz Tebb appointed as a classroom teacher in 2011. Liz worked in a casual position for three terms prior to gaining a permanent appointment.

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Staff establishment

Position	Number
Principal	1
Assistant Principal(s)	2
Classroom Teachers	6.5
Teacher Librarian	.2
SLSO	3
AEO	1
Counsellor	.3
School Administrative & Support Staff (SASS)	2.4
GA	.4
Total	16.8

Teacher qualifications

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

Teaching staff include 5 secondary teachers and 4.5 primary teachers. The Principal and two Assistant Principals have Masters Degrees in Special Education with experience in working with students with behavioural and emotional difficulties. The Principal also trained as a school counsellor and is a registered psychologist.

Qualifications	% of staff
Degree or Diploma	66%
Postgraduate	34%



Ladies of Variety painting nails

Financial summary

Date of financial summary:	30/11/2010
Income	\$
Balance brought forward	65,448.57
Global funds	86,818.65
Tied funds	174,618.35
School & community sources	6,418.80
Interest	5,585.57
Trust receipts	2,750.00
Canteen	0.00
Total income	276,190.37
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	1,363.68
Excursions	3,539.09
Extracurricular dissections	6,129.28
Library	0.00
Training & development	4,183.89
Tied funds	87,241.21
Casual relief teachers	23,105.86
Administration & office	42,578.00
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	30,888.32
Maintenance	4,861.69
Trust accounts	1,970.86
Capital programs	0.00
Total expenditure	205,861.88
Balance carried forward	135,777.06

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

Eco Schools Grant

The Eco Schools Grant of \$2,500 was used to provide seating for outdoor lessons and recreation activities in the bush tucker garden. Bunning's contribution to the landscaping allowed funding originally approved to establish the garden to be reallocated towards the purchase of aluminium seating and garden benches for class groups. Enthusiastic workers from Bunning's cleared and mulched the grounds, provided planter boxes and plants and constructed powdered granite pathways to create a Bushtucker garden.

Students from DET schools in the Inner West, Sydney City, Georges River, Lane Cove and North Shore networks planted traditional bush tucker and vegetable plants.

The Stewart House School playground has been transformed from a barren patch of bare earth to an outdoor learning space where the children can relax and enjoy lessons in a safe, motivating and imaginative outdoor environment. Staff and students are very grateful for the effort made by the Bunning's team to create a safe and stimulating outdoor environment for all to enjoy.



Seating for a class group in the outdoor learning area.

School performance 2010

Achievements

Arts

In 2010 our performing arts program continued with students attending sessions at Jane Stanley's Dance Studios at Brookvale and experiencing four Terms of activities through the Active After School Community Program (AASC). Jane also provided entertainment for students for our assemblies.



Singing group with Nina and Jane



Clay Pendants

Visual and practical arts

The employment of an art teacher in 2010, Telly Tuita resulted in a revision of the art program. The new fun ideas engage and incorporate aspects of the Social Skills Program to enrich the student experience. Three of the new art activities introduced during the year are Warrior Mask, clay pendants and digital self-portraits.

The purpose behind these activities was varied; warrior mask encouraged students to identify positive people in their lives and set goals and ambitions for their future; constructing clay pendants was both therapeutic and a learning experience in the process of ceramics with students making a creative and beautiful product to take home and self-portrait was a digital art activity designed for students to be comfortable with their own image and thus themselves, while identifying and highlighting their strengths.



Digital self-portraits



Sport

The Stewart House program provided opportunities for students to develop their skills in a range of sports. Due to our unique location at South Curl Curl Beach, many sporting lessons were held on and around the coastal environment. Our Beach Awareness program continued with the support of volunteer members of Surf Lifesaving Australia. Every Wednesday students participated in the beach safety program followed by beach activities such as volleyball, cricket, soccer and swimming.

Swimming is a major part of the Stewart House program both in beach pools and indoor swimming centres. Swimming is used as an activity to encourage social interaction as well as assist in developing student's swimming ability and awareness of pool safety. Students also play soccer, touch football, basketball, cricket, dance, indigenous games, scooter riding to develop skills in team work and sportsmanship.

Significant programs and initiatives

Literacy

During 2010 the teaching staff promoted literacy in an attempt to motivate students to read. The literacy program has been linked to our excursion program through activities such as "In my backyard" and "I surfed with the Duke".

We have been fortunate to have had thousands of books donated to the school from various sources. Book assemblies are conducted for each group of students highlighting the importance of literacy skills with over two and a half thousand books distributed in the past year. Teachers assist students to choose books to take home with students also encouraged to select

books for younger siblings so that they can assume the role of a reading teacher. This program has been extremely successful and will benefit students in developing a love of reading and more advanced reading and comprehension skills.

Social and Emotional Skills Program

Background

The Social and Emotional Skills Program continues to address student needs through the explicit teaching of social skills and emotional regulation with reinforcement during the excursions and 'Out of School Hours' program. In the senior program students investigate the concepts of harm minimisation and look at the reasons why students might choose to take drugs or consume alcohol. The harmful effects of tobacco smoking, alcohol consumption and drug taking are discussed and alternative strategies suggested using a powerpoint presentation, videos and internet resources.

Future directions

The social skills lessons will continue to be developed with engaging activities and during 2011 will be further integrated into a holistic curriculum incorporating lessons from Life Education.



Class relaxing at a Christmas function

Other programs

Preventative Dental Health

All students visit the dental therapists for a range of services including; urgent treatment as needed, examination and mapping of teeth and fluoride treatment. Funding for 2011 has been renewed by

all parties as a result of the success of this program.

Progress on 2010 targets

Target 1

To introduce the Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI) into the senior program at Stewart House.

Our achievements include:

Senior students participated in the discussion of the seven Learning Dimensions with activities that provided a wide range of strategies for learning,

Enhanced the engagement and learning power for senior students through embedding the language of ELLI into an integrated senior program.

Target 2

Review and enhancement of the social skills program to improve students' social and emotional skills and resilience.

Our achievements include:

The Social Skills Program was reviewed by all teaching staff during 2010 to include novel strategies to teach skills enhancing social and emotional competence. The revised lesson plans continue to be the focus of the school program with a greater range of activities provided. Changes to the senior program have encouraged an increase in positive self talk and reflection by senior students, increased opportunities to identify short and long term goals, generating hope for the future and the identification of harm minimisation strategies appropriate for multi-stage class.

The emotionality of the visiting students has been of concern among the adolescent classes with the management of students' emotions continuing to demand high levels of support from all staff.

The increased use of the interactive whiteboard in emotional literacy has assisted students to identify the range of emotions from calm to extreme, to improve the articulation of emotions and subsequently decrease over-dramatising.

Target 3

To increase the use of technology as a teaching and learning tool throughout the school with Connected Classrooms integrated into the Stewart House program and class activities.

Our achievements include:

Whiteboards are being used for a range of lessons by all teachers. Two whiteboards are in classrooms and teachers can take their classes to the assembly area.

The Connected Classrooms or videoconferencing whiteboard was installed in 2010. It has been used for professional learning by staff. The use of Connected Classrooms to enhance student learning through connection with their own and other communities was not achieved due to time limitations and staff lack of skill.



Special education group enjoying Homebush pool

Key evaluations

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum.



Student captains of St Ives North with their Principal Mr David Smith presenting a cheque from Year 6 students

Educational and management practice

During 2010 we continued trialling a range of assessment tools to evaluate the Stewart House programs.

Background

Progress on evaluation of the program stalled during 2010 due to the loss of experienced executives but the appointment of two assistant principals in 2010 will ensure that the evaluation process is carried out during 2011.

We have trialled several surveys as a measure of outcomes for the 12 day program.

In 2009 staff trialled the Matson Evaluation of Social Skills in Youngsters. In 2010 staff trialled the survey “Feelings about Yourself and School”, Student Survey Primary. (DET Vict. 1998). Students had difficulty in working independently to complete the survey due to poor literacy skills in both the “Matson” and the “Feelings about Yourself and School”. We will be simplifying the “Feelings about Yourself and School” to enable students to complete it independently and gain a measure of our success during the twelve day visit.

“Feelings about Yourself and School Students Survey (primary)” is a 26 item survey developed by DET Victoria, which links items into Scales to provide a measure of

- Self Esteem,
- Student safety,
- Connectedness to Peers,
- Connectedness to Teachers,
- Connectedness to School and
- Motivation to Learn.



Students enjoyed the Variety Xmas Party in Darling Harbour.

This survey was administered on the day prior to the student’s departure to determine whether students were positive about the learning

experiences during the 12 day visit at Stewart House.

However there was a small group of students who displayed ambivalence or negative attitudes in their connectedness to peers, teachers and school. As these surveys were anonymous it was not possible to identify the students with concerning results.

Future directions

Groups of students of varying ages will be assessed on the "Feelings about Yourself and School Students Survey (primary)" on arrival and prior to departure in 2011. Staff will support the assessments so that poor readers can participate. The sample of 90 students trialled in 2010 indicated that the mean of students' scores was above the 75th percentile with the majority of students showing adaptive adjustment in relation to the criteria measured. The pre survey at the beginning of the visit will provide information about students' feelings about their home schools over the previous two weeks and the post survey will provide information about the 12 day visit to Stewart House.

Other evaluations

Relationship between referral information and bookings.

During 2009 the groups were reorganised to reflect the level of disadvantage and changes in student populations in the school education groups in NSW with 2010 the first year of the new groupings. Traditionally groups had included both city and country children. During 2010 some groups were combined to include all city or all country children.

A comparison of the records for behavioural bookings Table 1, (2008 to 2010) shows a marked reduction in yellow and orange bookings during 2009, following the introduction of the social skills program.

However the bookings were slightly higher in 2010 reflecting the increased difficulties of the referred students. School procedures are successful in minimising the numbers of students moving from Yellow which is a serious warning to Orange when both family/ carer and school executive are contacted and negative consequences imposed.

The increase in bookings in 2010 appears to be due to the revised combinations of students attending with Groups 15 and 16 being city groups rather than mixed city/ country students.

Table 1. Comparison Behaviour Bookings 2008 to 2010

	2008	2009	2010
Yellow	78	60	66
Orange	17	7	10
Red Discharge	7	6	9
Totals	102	73	85

Table 2. Comparison Peer Acceptance and Bookings between groups 2010

	Group 15	Group 16	Group 19
Bookings 2010	10	11	0
Peer Acceptance	21	24	10

In 2010, Group 15 had 10 bookings and Group 16, 11 bookings. The total of 21 bookings for the two groups was 25% of the year's total of 85 but only 10% of the total student numbers.

Previously city and country groups were combined based on the belief that country students were a moderating influence on students from city areas. Groups 15 and 16 were students from the Sydney Metropolitan Area. A comparison Group 19 that had no behavioural bookings was made up of students from country NSW. Unfortunately timetables for school groups to attend were determined for a two year period so these city groups will continue for 2011.

In Groups 15 and 16, 2010 the majority of bookings were for aggressive behaviour with 8 /10 bookings in Group 15 and 10/11 bookings in Group 16 for violence between students.

When referral information was compared between groups, the only item that scored closely for Groups 15 and 16 but was significantly lower for Group 19 was Peer Acceptance. Referees identified 21 students in Group 15, 24 students in Group 16 and only 10 students in Group 19 as experiencing difficulties in being accepted by their peers. It appears that peer acceptance is the best indicator of successful outcomes for a student visit and a score in this area needs investigation prior to the student visit.



Students in South Curl Curl Ocean Baths

Communication to the wider community

During 2010 following the introduction of school programs there was a need to develop a presentation to publicise what the school provided as distinct from Stewart House “Out of School Hours” programs. The School Programs Powerpoint “Raising the Bar” was used to showcase what the school offered to a range of groups including; NSW Federation of Parents and Citizens Northern Beaches Executive Group and State Executive, Probus Beecroft and School Counsellors in Training. Two videoconferences were publicised to teachers in October with one being cancelled due to connection difficulties.

In November, 2010 I spent three weeks in the United Kingdom and the United States on a study tour to look at school programs supporting children’s mental health, attend and present at a conference in Washington, the “Sixth World Conference on the Promotion of Mental Health. Addressing Imbalances: Promoting Equity in Mental Health” and completed facilitator’s training in Effective Lifelong Learning Program at Bristol University.



Presentation showcasing school programs.

Professional learning

Teachers engaged in a wide range of professional learning activities relating to ICT and mental health.

Executive	Staff
Women in Educational Leadership	Macquarie ICT Centre Blogs and Wikis
Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory	Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory
Autism Spectrum Disorder T. Atwood	Autism Spectrum Disorder T. Atwood
Leap Conference	Indigenous Games
Videoconference training	Videoconference training
CPR First Aide	CPR First Aide
Swimming policy- risk assessments, scanning, testing	AUSWIM Swimming policy- risk assessments, scanning, testing
Beyondblue Anxiety and Mood Disorders	Beyondblue Anxiety and Mood Disorders
Aboriginal Cultural Training TAFE	Aboriginal Cultural Training TAFE
DET Mandatory Training	DET Mandatory Training

School development 2009 – 2011

School development will build on the existing programs to ensure that they are embedded in school practice throughout periods of staff turnover.



Thai Puppet show at the Opera House

Targets for 2011

Target 1

Reviewing student outcomes using the “Feelings About Yourself and School” or other measurement tool.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Staff evaluate student progress through the administration of a pre and post test survey during the two week visit with a six week follow up in the home schools. Five groups will be assessed during 2011,
- The continual revision and improvement of the program using strategies that will enhance social and emotional wellbeing using the results of the survey.

Our success will be measured by:

- Survey results for the five samples will be compared between first and last day which will be a comparison between home school and Stewart House School.
- Yellow bookings which is the serious warning level will be contained and not escalate to Orange,
- Student self evaluation for a sample of student reports will show improved engagement and skills as per the measurement tool chosen.



Ice Skating with Ladies of Variety

Target 2

Introduce Positive Behaviour for Learning, PBL as a scaffold within which to build the welfare procedures.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- The Effective Behaviour Survey will be administered to all staff for data based decision making in Terms one and three,
- Professional learning activities in PBL for all staff at the Term two Staff Development Day,
- School policy documentation to be reworded into a PBL format as a framework for practice to ensure that expectations are determined and implemented across the organisation.

Our success will be measured by:

- Greater consistency in student management across all staff in the organisation,
- Creating and maintaining a framework to provide positive expectations and transparency of practice that all staff will adhere to,
- Continual data collection,
- Visual reminders in all settings.



Students assist at Variety “ A Taste of Chefs”

Target 3

Connected classrooms to be integrated into Stewart House programs.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Access to professional learning activities,
- Access to programs for students including cultural activities for Aboriginal students,
- Presenting Stewart House programs to statewide audiences.

Our success will be measured by:

- The regular use of Connected Classrooms for professional learning and student activities,

- Information communicated to schools about staff and programs at Stewart House to assist with more appropriate referrals.

- Roy Goodenough, Assistant Principal
- Ruth Harris School, Administrative Manager

Target 4

To establish a collaborative relationship with Life Education for the provision of lessons including; anti bullying, harm minimisation and healthy eating within the Life Education program.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Life Education to provide six sessions for each of 13 groups this year in their mobile van,
- Educators from Life Education will participate and observe the current program to develop lessons in collaboration with teachers at Stewart House School.

Our success will be measured by:

- A comprehensive program provided during the 12 day visit, using the skills of teachers from Life Education to complement school programs in teaching skills to visiting students.



Special Education Students relaxing at the pool

About this report

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

- Marilyn Bourne, Principal



Students enjoyed Chinese New Year



The launch of Life Education

School contact information

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Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/asr>