


QUEENSLAND STATE SCHOOL REPORTING - 2009

Darling Heights State School (1900)

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Principal's Foreword

Introduction

Darling Heights State School has a diverse and culturally rich population. Our school enrolment has remained stable at around 530 students. 130 of our students have identified that they are from other cultures, 108 children indicating they are born overseas. 100 are students who have English as a Second Language. Of these students, 20 are Sudanese who have been given refugee status in Australia. We are truly a Multi –Cultural School with tolerance and understanding of others being features. The significant challenges for this school in coming years will be to respond to this diverse and growing population, continue to manage the roll-out of Education Queensland Policy and implement the requirements of the new National Curriculum.

For 2010 and beyond, we will continue to work to provide a happy, enjoyable and safe environment for our students, encourage and maintain parental involvement in our school and their child's/children's education while communicating with our whole community.

School progress towards its goals in 2009

Our school achieved all it set out to do in 2009, especially about its Curriculum Enhancement Agenda. Completion occurred with all elements of the QCARF agenda and we successfully completed Staff PD about Reading and the Reading Process.

Our ESL program has been extended to include 2 permanent staff based at the school and they have been housed in their own room which we now refer to as the ESL room.

On the facilities agenda we took possession of our Community Recreation Facility and have been using it in all ways imagined. The enhancements planned as part of the National Schools Pride funding were completed with the covered outdoor learning areas being well received as have been the classroom upgrades and installation of Electronic Interactive Whiteboards.

Future outlook

In 2010, we plan to implement a range of initiatives as described in our 2010 Annual Operation Plan. These foci are specifically about Curriculum, Teaching, Learning Performance and School-Wide Reform. Initiatives include continuing our focus on Literacy & Numeracy, progressing our School-Wide understanding about "Inclusion", continuing to implement the expectations of our Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students and School-Wide Positive Behaviour Programme, development of an Academic Improvement Strategy, continuing to manage the roll-out of Education Queensland Policy and preparing for the implementation of the new National Curriculum.

Our school at a glance

School Profile

Darling Heights is a State School located in the south-western quadrant of Toowoomba. It is situated very close to the University of Southern Queensland with a 2009 maximum enrolment of 540 Primary students, 74 of those being in the Prep Year. 32 of our students are enrolled in our Special Education Facility. In all, this school offered a comprehensive education from Prep through to Year 7 in a co-educational setting which featured 20 co-educational Classes.

Total student enrolments for this school in 2009:

Total Enrolment	Girls	Boys	Enrolment Continuity (Feb 2009 – Nov 2009)
514	239	275	76%

Characteristics of the student body:

In terms of Boys and Girls, our student body is balanced. In 2009, we had a greater number of boys enrolled in Years 6 and 7 with a higher percentage of girls to boys in Years 1 and 2. During the year, our enrolment from Day 8 can grow anything up to 10%. We receive a number of student enrolments, many International, from parents who are studying at the University of Southern Queensland. USQ does not commence lectures until late February and we also gain enrolment from those commencing study in Semester 2

Class sizes – Proportion of school classes achieving class size targets in 2009

Phase	Average Class Size	Percentage of classes in the school			
		On or under target	Under Target	On Target	Over Target
Prep – Year 3	23	100%	80%	20%	0%
Year 4 – Year 10	28	60%	50%	10%	40%
All Classes	25	80%	65%	15%	20%

School Disciplinary Absences

Disciplinary Absences	Count of Incidents
Short Suspensions - 1 to 5 days	8
Long Suspensions - 6 to 20 days	2
Exclusions	0
Cancellations of Enrolment	0

Curriculum offerings

Darling Heights State School offers programs in all of the Key Learning Areas. The school is divided into three Sub-Schools supported by specialist departments in order to best serve the diverse needs of students. All Sub-Schools offer Core Literacy and Numeracy blocks with specialised options programs to enhance learning at the various levels. The Junior and Intermediate areas offer departmental reading programs. We run a fledgling program to encourage higher achieving students in the school. This includes extension literacy groups in the Junior School, an enrichment program in the Intermediate School and extension modules in the Senior School as well as extra-curricula offerings as Teacher time allows.

The school's Music Specialist teaches classes from Infant to Senior School. Opportunities exist for students to participate in Choir, Stage and Concert Bands, Eisteddfod, Song Festival and numerous public performances. Instrumental Teachers provide weekly lessons for woodwind, brass and percussion.

In general, our learning framework consists of our curriculum framework with its core learning's across the Key Learning Areas providing the knowledge and skills essential for all students. Our Whole School Literacy Plan provides the core for a developmental reading; oral and written literacy program across all the year levels which is aimed at meeting individual student needs. Our whole school ICT for Learning Agreement sets out the school's direction for the use of technologies, including computers.

Our school at a glance

Extra curricula activities

Children in the Preparatory Year to Year Two participate in day excursions to Amaroo Environmental Field Studies Centre at Klienton. Year 3 travel to Lone Pine Sanctuary, Year Four to Jondaryan Woolshed, Year Five children have a three day excursion to Tallebudgera, Year 6 and 7 students undertake trips that alternate between the Sunshine Coast and Canberra.

How Information and Communication Technologies are used to assist learning.

Computer labs are established in the Library, Intermediate Area and Senior Area. Each classroom has two or three computers. Each computer is connected to a server and the Internet. An Internet Use Agreement Form needs to be signed by parents before children have access. Students frequently use computers to enhance their learning.

Our first 3 Interactive White Boards were purchased and installed and a further 7 were purchased as part of our National School Pride program. These will be operational early in 2010.

Technology is now seen as a tool to assist learning and is used as such.

An extensive infrastructure and cabling upgrade was signed off in 2009 which should bring greater speed and access to our students as they use the equipment we have.

Plans were developed for both computer labs to be upgraded in 2010.

Social climate

In terms of the "Social Climate" of Darling Heights State School, one needs look at the support provided to parents and children alike. A Guidance Officer, Speech Language Pathologist, ESL Advisory Teacher and a Chaplain are all part of the School and are actively supporting students and parents. Co-operative Religious Instruction is taught in all classes, except Prep, once a week, by volunteer visiting teachers. HRE/Sexuality courses for Year 6/7 and HRE programs are conducted right across the school and embedded as part of the Health and Physical Education Syllabus. The Life Education Program has been endorsed by the P&C for the full cycle of the next 8 years to allow 2009 Prep students to experience the total program by the time they exit in Year 7. The supportive and caring nature of the school environment has a very positive impact on the morale of students and staff alike.

Our School Chaplaincy Program is a feature of the support that we are able to provide all members of our community.

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction with the school

Annually, Education Queensland undertakes a survey process to gauge Parent, Student and Teacher opinions to aspects of school operations. Each year up to 40 school families are randomly selected for this survey process.

It has always been pleasing for us to see that since the inception of this survey process, on average, in excess of 80% of parents/caregivers and students surveyed are satisfied that this is a good school and that they or their children are receiving a good education from the school. In 2009, 83% of those who responded were satisfied that this was a good school.

In any one, year staff members satisfied with the morale in the school has been as high as 96% with teacher satisfaction averaging in the 86% range.

Performance measure	Result 2009
Percentage of parents/caregivers satisfied that their child is getting a good education at school	80%
Percentage of students satisfied that they are getting a good education at school	78%
Percentage of parents/caregivers satisfied with their child's school	83%
Percentage of school workforce satisfied with access to professional development opportunities that relate to school and systemic initiatives	69%
Percentage of staff members satisfied with morale in the school	86%

Our school at a glance

Involving parents in their child's education.

A feature of our school is the continuing work undertaken to involve parents in the activities of our school and learning's of their children. Central to this has been the re-invigoration of the Volunteer Co-ordinator's position. As a result of the efforts of this Co-ordinator, parents are encouraged to become involved and made feel very welcome in the life of our school. One initiative has had parents invited to place their names on a Volunteer Register, which allows our school to hold a database of people with skills who we can access for assistance. A Volunteer's Christmas Party was hosted for the fifth time in 2009 and recognised the wonderful work of those who can become involved in our school.

Collectively, school staff encourage parents and families to become involved in our school and the activities of their children.

Our staff profile

Staff composition, including Indigenous Staff

Workforce Composition	Teaching Staff	Non-teaching Staff	Indigenous Staff
Headcounts	45	34	1
Full-time equivalents	41	17	0

Qualifications of all teachers.

Highest level of attainment	Number of classroom teachers and school leaders at the school
Doctorate	0
Masters	2
Bachelor degree	26
Diploma	5
Certificate	0

The pie chart illustrates the distribution of qualifications among all teachers. The largest segment is Bachelor degree at 79%, followed by Diploma at 15%, and Masters at 6%. Doctorate represents 0% of the total.

Expenditure on and teacher participation in professional development.

The total funds expended on teacher professional development in 2009 was \$10 058.

The major professional development initiatives are as follow:

School Wide Positive Behaviour Training,

Literacy Workshops especially about Reading and the Reading Process, Punctuation and Grammar.

Essential Skills for Classroom Management

The involvement of the teaching staff in professional development activities during 2009 was %100.

Average staff attendance

For permanent and temporary staff and school leaders, the staff attendance rate was 96% in 2009.

Proportion of staff retained from the previous school year.

From the end of the 2009 School Year, 89% of staff were retained by the school for the entire 2009 school year. "Retirement" and "Sea Change" effectively accounted for those who left us.

Performance of our students

Key student outcomes

Attendance

Student attendance - 2009

The average attendance rate for the whole school as a percentage in 2009 was 93%.

Student attendance for each year level

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
92%	95%	94%	94%	93%	93%	93%			

Description of how non-attendance is managed by the school

Non-attendance is managed in state schools in line with the DET policies, SMS-PR-029: Managing Student Absences and SMS-PR-036: Roll Marking in State Schools, which outline processes for managing and recording student attendance and absenteeism. Rolls are marked by classroom teachers, as per the above guidelines, twice per day and recorded centrally at week's end. Parents with students who have unexplained absences of longer than 3 days are contacted for explanation. Long term unexplained absences are followed up through appropriate EQ and relevant external authorities eg Queensland Police Service and Department of Child Safety.

Performance of our students

Achievement – Years 3, 5, and 7

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results – our reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy results for the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

Domain	Measures	Yr 3	Yr 5	Yr 7	Yr 9	
Reading	Average score for the school in 2009	401	464	541		
	Average score for Australia in 2009	410.8	493.9	541.1	580.5	
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	80%	80%	92%	
		2009	75%	82%	78%	
	For the school the percentage of students in the upper two bands	2008	36%	25%	20%	
2009		22%	26%	21%		
Writing	Average score for the school in 2009	425	461	518		
	Average score for Australia in 2009	414.5	484.7	532.4	568.9	
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	87%	82%	82%	
		2009	80%	81%	76%	
	For the school the percentage of students in the upper two bands	2008	27%	11%	13%	
2009		44%	15%	16%		
Spelling	Average score for the school in 2009	407	460	544		
	Average score for Australia in 2009	404.8	487.2	540.0	576.3	
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	88%	88%	93%	
		2009	79%	84%	79%	
	For the school the percentage of students in the upper two bands	2008	23%	10%	24%	
2009		33%	16%	21%		
Grammar and Punctuation	Average score for the school in 2009	411	481	548		
	Average score for Australia in 2009	419.7	499.7	539.5	573.5	
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	84%	85%	94%	
		2009	77%	83%	79%	
	For the school the percentage of students in the upper two bands	2008	28%	28%	22%	
2009		38%	29%	16%		
Numeracy	Average score for the school in 2009	363	461	559		
	Average score for Australia in 2009	393.9	486.8	543.6	589.1	
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	84%	87%	88%	
		2009	77%	87%	79%	
	For the school the percentage of students in the upper two bands	2008	13%	18%	30%	
2009		17%	10%	34%		