School context

Newcastle East Public School, Australia’s oldest school, has enjoyed a year of consolidation and steady growth. This is the school’s 198th year of continuous service to the children of inner-city Newcastle, and this year some significant preparatory steps towards the nation’s first school bicentenary were put in motion. The school’s student population has remained around 215, the school’s academic reputation has grown, and staff have worked cooperatively towards the common goal of enhancing our students’ wellbeing and learning. We have maintained our richly diverse mix of backgrounds, ethnicities, and languages, and expanded our range of co-curricular services available to our students.

There is no doubt that our schools are operating in a climate of great change, in the way we are governed at the local level, in the nature of the curricula that we teach, and in the way that schools now interact with their communities. Our efforts in 2013 have been directed to addressing these many changes, to better meet our students’ needs in the future.

Our school community is well-served by an enthusiastic and innovative staff, with strong academic, dramatic and musical qualifications. Stability of staffing has made the tasks of consolidation of teacher skills and expansion of extra programs very easy, and as Principal, I am grateful to all staff for the outstanding effort they have made this year. There is a very strong sense of loyalty to our school and to our students evident in every aspect of school life. It is true that NEPS teachers do “go the extra mile” for their charges! The principles of Quality Teaching pervade all lessons, and the working relationship between staff and parents has been particularly strong this year. Above all, our teachers show very real concern and compassion for each student, and the staff’s blend of experience and innovation has served our school well, students achieving some outstanding personal goals in 2010. Teachers have worked hard to develop their own skills in use of interactive whiteboards in the classroom, giving lessons a fresh relevance and dynamism.

This report details the school’s operations in 2013, and our preparations for the future.

Principal’s message

The year 2013 has been another year of educational excellence for our school. The student welfare aspect of school life has been boosted, with staff training in identifying students at risk, and students with challenging needs, both academic and behavioural.

This school year has tested our resourcefulness as a school community, with the discovery of asbestos contamination in our grounds during early Term Three leading to almost five months without use of our playground. With student physical exercise and well-being a continuing priority, our proximity to King Edward Park proved an advantage. During the second half of the year, teachers and students made constant use of the Park facilities and open space. Remediation of our grounds could be conducted only in the absence of students, meaning that both Spring and Christmas vacations saw extensive earth-works and land-scaping to ensure safety from asbestos materials.

In spite of these difficulties, the school continued to hold a high academic standard, with many students achieving at very high levels. State representations in areas as diverse as drama, public speaking and swimming, along with Tournament of Minds, reflected our genuine pursuit of truly broad educational goals, and the development of well-rounded individuals, rather than the narrow NAPLAN-focus apparent in some schools.

An awareness of the need to assist others in times of need coloured our “applied” approach to values education. In 2013, our on-going association with CamLy Orphanage in DaLat, Vietnam, resulted in many advances for the children residing there. These included sourcing a permanent water supply, enabling better vegetable production and hence a varied diet, new classroom furniture, and construction of a new roof over the dormitory.

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.

John R Beach
Student information

Student enrolment profile

Following several modifications to the school’s zone, significantly reducing it in size in an effort to manage strong growth, since 2010 enrolments have stabilised in a population band between 210 and 220. Given the restrictions imposed by our existing accommodation and the size of our school grounds, no significant future growth is expected in the short term.

Student attendance profile

Overall student attendance has been higher at NEPS than in other schools in our region, despite an on-going issue with partial absence caused by lateness to school.

Management of non-attendance

The school works closely with our Home School Liaison Officer providing support, including home visits, to those few families recording poor attendance. Direct intervention by the Principal has been successful in 2013 in addressing particular cases of chronic lateness to school.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teacher(s)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Reading Recovery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Support Teacher(s)</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counsellor</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Australian Education Regulation, 2013 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce. Currently there are no Aboriginal teachers on our staff.

Teacher qualifications

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Institute of Teachers Accreditation</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Science Club members investigating the effects of moisture and light on promoting plant growth.
Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary</th>
<th>30/11/2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>76367.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>117214.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>68556.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>104274.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>2689.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>13422.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>382526.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Expenditure**            |            |
| Teaching & learning        |            |
|   Key learning areas       | 15090.78   |
|   Excursions               | 21202.73   |
|   Extracurricular dissections | 49519.81  |
| Library                    | 2934.74    |
| Training & development     | 70.00      |
| Tied funds                 | 67175.83   |
| Casual relief teachers     | 32457.71   |
| Administration & office    | 45719.18   |
| School-operated canteen    | 0.00       |
| Utilities                  | 28640.50   |
| Maintenance                | 8821.61    |
| Trust accounts             | 12261.68   |
| Capital programs           | 23128.19   |
| Total expenditure          | 307022.76  |
| Balance carried forward    | 75503.27   |

A full copy of the school’s 2013 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council and/or the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2013

Academic achievements

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.

Year 3: from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest for Year 3)
Year 5: from Band 3 (lowest) to Band 8 (highest for Year 5)
Year 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)
Year 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

The My School website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing (NAPLAN). School performance this year was significantly above state averages, and above the level of similar-sized schools throughout New South Wales.

Click on the link [http://www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au) and enter our school name in the Find a school and select GO to access the school data.

Other achievements

Significant programs and initiatives

#### Student Welfare

School Council’s review of this policy area, at the end of 2012, resulted in a number of initiatives designed to provide better pastoral care of our students. Chief among these was the appointment of a Student Welfare Worker, Christine Sheppard, an experienced teacher, counselor, and former University Chaplain. The position does allow access to the home more readily. This role has been very successful in providing support for students, staff and families in these situations: -

- Death of family member
- Serious illness of student or family
- Financial difficulty
- Acute emotional stress
- Mental health
Extra-curricular Programs

NEPS operates significant co-curricular programs, designed to provide challenging additional activities for more able students. During 2013 these included:

- **Tournament of Minds**, with four teams competing regionally, and two proceeding to State Finals at UNSW
- **La Petite Ecole** French language school, with classes well-attended by thirty students on Saturdays and week-days after-school
- **Active After-school Sports**, a compensatory program as part of a larger thrust to keep our students engaged, healthy and active. This year sports offered to students included surfing, cricket, touch football, basketball, futsal, and netball
- **GATS Extension** programs for Stage Two and Stage Three students, providing horizontal enrichment in maths, English and Philosophy
- **Design and Build** activities each term to encourage cooperative problem-solving

Sport and Well-being

NEPS sport program for 2013 offered students in Years K-6 a range of opportunities to improve their physical skills and general fitness. We began the year with our inclusion in the gymnastics program. The students enjoyed the diversity of activities and equipment offered each week, building the students’ fitness levels and flexibility.

Once again students have really enjoyed opportunities to get fit and active through our expanding after-school sport programs. Surfing, cricket, both indoor and outdoor, soccer, netball, oztag and the introduction of junior games for Year 1 and 2 were the sports and activities held at NEPS this year. With the help of dedicated NEPS staff and a range of instructors we have continued to organise and deliver a wonderful, diverse range of activities and I’d like to thank Mr Beach and Miss Varagnolo who give up their time each week to commit to the success of this program. We look forward to its continued success in 2014. This year many primary students chose dance as a Friday sport option. Mrs Edge’s students have created and performed some wonderful dances for all of us.

Congratulations to our House Captains for 2013, who led their teams to victory or near victory this year. Eckford, Ross, Murphy and Fraser houses were well represented by competitors at Mayfield throughout our swimming carnival, King Edward Park at our Grandparents Day and Cross Country Carnival and Newcastle Athletics Track.

NEPS students achieve success in their sporting endeavours with a lot of hard work and determination and here at NEPS we have living proof of those students who strive to achieve their best. Earlier this year NEPS was proud to congratulate the two students who represented the Hunter Region at state level for swimming—Gus Springthorpe and Heidi Schneider and the two students who represented the Newcastle Zone at the regional level—Angus Tait for swimming and Genevieve Van Rensburg for Cross Country.

Aboriginal Education

Our school has very few students identifying as indigenous. Teachers monitor the progress of these children through annual meetings with parents to develop Personalised Learning Programs for them, and to anticipate any learning difficulties, or assess extra educational needs. On the whole school front, respect is paid to national days for aboriginal people, and they are a key element of our Harmony Day celebrations.

Multicultural Education

NEPS has significant numbers of overseas students, many paying full tuition fees, and there is no problem raising awareness or acceptance of foreign cultures in the school. Harmony Day this year featured dancing by our middle-Eastern dance group, and a special dedication of the school to our new alliance with Cam Ly Orphanage, DaLat, Vietnam. Educational needs for these non-English speaking children are met by our ESL teacher, who worked with them individually two days each week.
School planning and evaluation 2012—2014

School evaluation processes
Gaining accurate data about our school’s performance is a high priority for staff and School Council, and essential in evaluating our progress towards our school targets. The processes used to collect and triangulate this data include:

- Analysis of external testing data, including ICAS and NAPLAN tests in English and mathematics
- Data obtained for School Council’s annual telephone survey. With similar items used in this survey now over a decade, it is possible to consider long-term trends and emerging issues
- Focus group discussions in specific areas under review, this year looking at the functionality of our Student Welfare Worker role, and the “take-up” rate for educational software in use at home.

School planning 2012—2014: progress in 2013

School priority 1
Strengthen the provision standard of pastoral care and student welfare

Outcomes from 2012–2014
Planning Room referrals have dropped by 25%
Student attendance rate has risen to 95.5%
Partial absence due to lateness has dropped slightly

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:
- Successful appointment of Student Welfare Worker
- Negotiated role statement for the SWW role
- Review of Student Welfare policy

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014
- Introduction of more targeted programs using SWW expertise, similar to SHINE and Friendship group
- Staff training in Rock and Water program for use with Stage Two and Three students

School priority 2
Better address Information Technology outcomes

Outcomes from 2012–2014
Growing staff confidence in using IT solutions as part of everyday lessons

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:
- All staff trained in Smartboard use
- Smartboards placed in all rooms including Benson Library
- Information sharing as part of all staff Training and development meetings
- Staff trained in using data bases to organise and interpret data

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:
- Purchase of tablets and installation of wifi technology in C Block
- All staff attend Festival of Learning Conference

School priority 3
Implementation of NSW syllabus of National Curriculum

Outcomes from 2012–2014
All staff have completed three on-line modules covering introduction of English syllabus
All staff have developed trial units of work in English at various stage levels

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:
- Successful appointment of Student Welfare Worker
- Negotiated role statement for the SWW role
- Review of Student Welfare policy

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:
- Term One T and D meetings concentrate on unit development using Program Builder software
- Stage Committees work together on Consistent Teacher Judgment in writing assessment
School Priorities for 2014

School priority 1

Strengthen student performance in literacy and numeracy

Strategies

- Expand reading choices for Stage Three students by purchasing additional class novel sets with support materials for multi-modal study, meeting curriculum requirements of new syllabus
- Introduce RIBIT program to encourage wider reading for leisure
- Survey students sleep habits and access to internet devices in bedrooms
- Deploy LAST skills to lead group of Stage Two students needing additional support in writing
- Work with HSLO to address attendance issues of small number of students performing below average in maths and literacy
- Conduct ACMA workshops on internet security, privacy and etiquette

Success Indicators

- Student surveys indicate broader reading for leisure
- Improved writing performance in NAPLAN Grade 3
- Increased maths performance in problem-solving for Grades 3 and 5

School priority 2

Improve our delivery of sound student welfare services

Strategies

- Introduce Rock and Water program 3-6
- Strengthen anti-bullying education through drama-based activities K-6
- Raise profile of Student Welfare Worker through advertising campaign and extensive public appearances
- Deploy SWW and SLSO to create structured play situations
- ShineGirl program for all Grade 6 girls

Success indicators

- Reduction in referrals to School Counsellor from 20 annually to 15
- 50% fewer referrals to Planning Room for inappropriate behaviour
- Improved playground safety with 20% fewer accidents requiring treatment

School Priority 3

More effectively utilise IT resources to deliver better student outcomes

Strategies

- Install wi-fi network throughout school
- Purchase class set of ipads with syncing and charging station
- Develop staff skills in use of IT in effective student-based pedagogy
- P and C fund on-going applications purchasing program

Success indicators

- Teacher programs indicate effective use of integrated IT skills
- Effective curriculum differentiation using IT applications
- IT Committee studies IT Scope/Sequence documents from other schools, dividing full range of IT skills into grade-appropriate outcomes. IT Scope/Sequence displayed in Computer lab.

Professional learning

Several key areas were allocated significant funding in 2013: -

- IT skill-sharing meetings
- Festival of Learning attended by all staff
- English K-6 unit development

Key staffing appointments have added greatly to our intellectual capital in the IT area, helping to shape our new direction in pedagogical emphasis.
Parent/caregiver, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2013, the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses to the School Council-conducted telephone survey are presented below:

Parents overwhelmingly expressed their strong satisfaction (97.4%) with the positive school tone and atmosphere, while 97% agreed that they were kept well-informed about school issues. Given that this is the first full year of our e-newsletter, this was valuable feedback.

All parents surveyed (38% of school’s families) were very satisfied with the way that staff quickly resolved any issues involving their child.

One is six parents surveyed (16%) believed that the school needs to do more to promote fitness, and the same percentage believed that the school needs to do more to support children with learning difficulties, while 90% agreed that Ethics was a viable alternative to Scripture.

Program evaluations

Efficacy of Student Welfare Worker position

Background

This year was the first full year of support for students and families from our SWW. The role is similar to that of School Chaplain, intended to provide support for students and families in crisis situations, including family break-ups, deaths in the family or the school, and to provide social skills development.

Findings and conclusions

Community awareness of the position was at a low level, many responding that they had not heard of the role. More than half surveyed had not heard of the service, and so had not accessed.

Future directions

- SWW to attend assemblies and present awards each week
- Profile in Newsletter of SWW, her background and her range of supports offered

Student Engagement with IT applications at home

Background

The school and the Parents’ and Citizens’ Association have invested heavily ($8000 annually) in Mathletics and Reading Eggs, providing individualized instruction in these key areas, and allowing students to access their appropriate level both at school and at home. This inquiry investigated to what extent these software packages were being used at home.

Findings and Conclusions

Overwhelmingly evidence showed that high usage levels were seen in most homes. Over 60% of respondents answered positively to both applications, in reading and maths. Some commented that the volume of homework restricted the time available for these programs at home.

Future Directions

Evidence supports the school’s future purchases of both these packages. For planning in the next triennial period, the relevance of this finding is important. The school is embarking on a more IT-focused learning program for all students, and the popularity and applicability of home-based software applications supports this new direction. Recent parent surveys in IT show almost 100% of homes with full access to high-speed broadband, with 68% of Stage Three student having their own Internet-accessible devices. In this sense, our students are in fact “digital natives”, comfortable working in this environment.

Harmony Day activities. It’s a leprechaun!
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.

John Beach         Principal
Linda Thomas       Assistant Principal
Fiona Miller       Assistant Principal
Chris Baker        President P and C
Kate King          President, School Council

School contact information

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Email: john.beach@det.nsw.edu.au

School Code: 2736

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