SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2009
Site Annual Reporting Requirements have all been met, with all required data sets as per legislative requirements set by the Australian Government in Schedule E.

Blanchetown Primary School fosters and encourages the active participation of all members of the school and wider community. We endeavour to provide the students with an educationally rich and diverse curriculum whilst at the same time providing challenging activities based on the needs of the students. In 2009 the relationships between the staff, parents, students and the wider community continued to grow to support our vision of providing an accessible, inclusive caring, quality learning environment for children and their families, empowering all members of the school community. This was achieved through creating opportunities where all members of the school community could participate at a level of their choice.

All staff (both teaching and non teaching) work hard to ensure that students are making progress and improvements in their learning at all times. All learning experiences have direct links to SACSA. Evidence of student achievement in both Literacy and Numeracy is sent home each term through student Profiles.

1. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND TARGETS

Numeracy - Number

As a focus for 2009, we were able to achieve several of our desired targets throughout the year.

All Year 3, 5 and 7 students (non NEP) to achieve targeted skill band for their year level for NAPLaN testing in 2009.

Year 3 - In regard to the year three cohort, the numeracy results are very pleasing. 100% of year 3 students achieved their targeted skill band appropriate for their age. 80% of the students were above the National average compared to other students in year three across Australia. 60% of students were more than two skill bands higher than the National average in Numeracy which is outstanding.
Unfortunately I am limited in what I am able to disclose as the number of students in years 5 and 7 that sat the NAPLaN test in 2009 is less than five. However, I can comment on the following.

**Year 5** – 100% of year 5 students ranked in the middle (60% achievement) to top (20% achievement) which is very pleasing as it shows that the students are age appropriate or above in regard to Numeracy.

**Year 7** - I am able to report that whilst all year seven students were below the national average, despite receiving targeted intervention throughout 2009, no student was below the national minimum standard. Overall, whilst the NAPLaN test showed some areas for improvement in Numeracy, we must take into consideration the strengths of the students and that NAPLaN is a snapshot taken one day in 2009.

**100% of Year 1-7 students to make at least 6 months growth (within 6 months) in the Numeracy Progress Tests.**

After analysing the Numeracy Progress Test results that all students completed at the start and end of 2009, the results are not overly pleasing. We did no reach the target identified above. Only 52.9% of students reached the above target. Some students stayed the same, some students made less than six months growth (but still made positive growth) and other students in fact went backwards. From this, Numeracy will remain a big focus in 2010, so that we are able to improve student learning outcomes in Numeracy. The other aspect that was raised at a staff meeting is the suitability of the standardised test. In 2010, we will try to find an Australian numeracy test that is less than 10 years old which covers all areas of the Mathematics curriculum, rather than focusing heavily on a particular area of maths (ie decimals and fractions). We will also put SSO intervention in place for any student that is 12 months or more behind in numeracy in 2010.

**Literacy – Spelling**

**100% of Year 1-7 students to make at least 6 months growth (in 6 months) in standardised Literacy testing.**

This year our school worked on a whole school approach to spelling with both Cadell and Morgan Primary Schools to bring about consistency in the ways in which students learn spelling, to ultimately improve the students’ spelling results. Most of the recommendations made and the ways in which the teachers taught spelling were put into practice in Term 3. Standardised testing was conducted in Term 4, so overall not much growth was expected to be made in such a small period of time.

The Junior Primary students did not make as much growth as hoped with only 55% of students making positive growth. The students that did not make growth had been identified as requiring extra support and were on an Individual Learning Plan which had been developed for them prior to the final results. Our aim for 2010, will be to continue working hard on ensuring that all students (especially those 4 that did not make growth) are able to achieve success in their spelling.
In regard to the Years 4-7 students, the results were outstanding. One student made more than 4 years growth in less than 10 months. All Years 4-7 students that were enrolled at BPS at the start of 2009 made positive growth. Our target of 6 months growth in 6 months was achieved. Even though some of these students did not make enough growth to be age appropriate (where their spelling age matched or bettered their chronological age), all students improved anywhere from between 7 months to 49 months) Only those students that enrolled in the latter part of the year did not make as much growth in spelling as was hoped.

At the start of 2009, all R-7 students completed an opinion survey as to how they perceived their own spelling abilities. Whilst most students liked spelling, five students did not perceive themselves as being confident spellers. At the end of 2009, the same survey was administered and the results showed that the majority of students liked spelling and apart from four students, all students felt confident in their ability in regard to spelling.

On a whole, the work that the teachers did throughout 2009 in regard to spelling was very pleasing and the majority of the students made positive growth in their learning.

**Literacy – Reading**

*All students (R-7 including NEP) to complete the Premier’s Reading Challenge in 2009.*

In 2009 we had 100% of the students that commenced the year at BPS, complete the Premier’s Reading Challenge, which is a great result.

In 2009, we introduced a whole school approach to reading. Every student would read to an adult on a daily basis. We sought community volunteers to make this initiative successful and ensured that all staff made themselves available to listen to the students read on a daily basis. As part of this reading initiative, we also offered the students the opportunity to earn rewards. We implemented that for every 50 nights that the students read at home (signed by an adult) they could earn a five dollar voucher to spend on books through the Scholastic book club.

At the start of 2009, all R-7 students completed an opinion survey as to how they perceived their own reading abilities. Whilst most students liked reading, a quarter of the students did not perceive themselves as being confident readers. At the end of 2009, the same survey was administered and the results showed that the majority of students liked reading and more students felt that they were confident readers.
ENROLMENT

We live in a somewhat isolated, transient community and therefore predicting student numbers is always difficult. In 2009, we welcomed 11 new enrolments, three of which were new Reception students, one on an alternative placement and the remainder having moved to the area. We anticipated starting 2009 with only 15 students, yet finished the year on 26 students which was very positive for the school.

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PROGRESSIONS

All students progressed from their 2009 class to the next year level. Throughout 2009 we had one student transfer to another school and then return. Four students made the transition to high school.

Weed Warrior Programme – Growing and Releasing Biological Controls
ATTENDANCE

2009 saw the school’s attendance plan maintained and followed to ensure that the students were present and accounted for. Courtesy phone calls were made, follow up notes were sent home and newsletter items were written to remind parents of their obligations in ensuring the school was well informed if their child/ren would be away in advance or as a follow up after the event.

2009 saw a decrease in student attendance of 3.2% (down to 90.2%) compared to the year prior (93.4%). This is largely in part due to illnesses and the particular needs of a small cohort of students with additional medical needs. Given that we have a small sample size, our results are exacerbated by the complexity of the school and the individual student's needs (which does not get taken into consideration). In 2010, the school will be pursuing these absences more closely, especially in regard to chasing reasons as to why students were absent. Our current system shows there is room for improvement, so in 2010, those families that do not return the absence record slip will receive a follow up phone call to substantiate the absences.

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STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

In 2009, we had a cohort of students in Years 5 and 7 of less than 5 students in each group respectively. I am therefore unable to comment or show the graphs which highlight how the students went in the 2009 NAPLaN tests.

Looking at the standardised testing carried out throughout 2009 for all students, it must be noted that while some students are achieving below their chronological age in a range of standardised tests (Holborn Reading, Waddington Reading, Westwood Spelling and the Numeracy Progress Tests), most students made positive growth when comparing the test results from their previous attempt. Spelling (one of our focus areas in 2009) showed remarkable results with some students making more than four years growth in eight months. The students should be very proud of their continual efforts to better themselves and the staff should be equally proud of their achievements in finding practical solutions and ideas to ensure that the students they work with are making positive growth. In 2010, those students that have been identified as achieving 12 months or below their chronological age in a particular area will receive targeted one on one SSO support as part of their Individual Learning Plan to assist them with their learning.

Interaction Days with Morgan and Cadell are important components of the students’ learning.
PARENT / STUDENT / STAFF SATISFACTION

In 2009, Blanchetown Primary School offered all staff, students and parents the opportunity to partake in an electronic opinion survey. This year, 7 parents completed the survey which was an increase compared to that of 2008. All eligible students participated and so did most of the staff.

PARENT SATISFACTION

The results of the parent opinion survey were extremely pleasing this year. All four areas that were commented on (Quality of Teaching and Learning, Support of Learning, Relationships and Communication and Leadership and Decision Making) rated highly. The highest performing area according to the parents was Relationships and Communication. We here at BPS pride ourselves on fostering positive communications through clear communication. The second best performing area was that of Leadership and Decision Making. Only two areas were identified as having no appreciable difference to the overall state distribution. They were that parents have the opportunity to participate in decisions about their children’s education and parents are involved in the development of school plans. We continually offer the whole school community the option to complete surveys, seeking input into future directions that the school needs to take, however we rarely receive information back.

Parental Comments

We did not receive Parental comments in 2009 in the survey.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

In 2009, all eligible students completed the online survey to comment on aspects of their schooling and learning under the following categories; Quality of Teaching and Learning, Support of Learning, Relationships and Communication and Leadership and Decision Making. Nearly all student responses received were positive, with only one area being identified as an area for improvement. In 2010, we need to look at ways in which we can empower the students more in “Leadership and Decision Making” as ‘There are a number of different ways that I can be involved in making decisions about the school’ was the only area identified by the students as being negative. Apart from this, overall the students are happy to be at Blanchetown Primary School and are happy with the education that they are receiving.

Student Comments

‘We have a really small school and we don’t have children from different countries. We are a very friendly school so I think we would welcome them and help them to feel good at school and in the community.’

‘Our school is safe and well looked after’

‘More student leaders (required?) at this school’

Mid Murray Sports Day Victorious Winners!
STAFF SATISFACTION
The four areas that staff commented on were: Quality of Teaching and Learning, Support of Learning, Relationships and Communication and Leadership and Decision Making. All four areas rated highly with a high percentage of responses received in the above average agreement which is very positive for the school.

Staff Comments
‘Teachers at this school continually endeavour to increase and improve their own knowledge about learning programs and learning styles that all students can achieve success and can progress in their learning’

Our school uses the focus values of respect, confidence, responsibility, honesty and trustworthiness and doing your best to underpin expectations for high standards in learning and behaviour’

‘There is very strong evidence of positive relationships between all sections of the school community - students, teachers and parents/caregivers. Formal and informal communications happen continuously. My opinions and ideas are heard and respected’

The leadership in this school is excellent - everything is well organised. Students and staff are well supported in all their activities’

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE
Teaching staff attendance for the 2009 school year was 94.5% and the average number of days absent per teacher was 3.5 days.

TEACHING STAFF RETENTION
Blanchetown Primary School was able to maintain the same teachers in 2009 – Miss Andrea Fox in the R-3 class and Mrs Ros Simpfendorfer in the 4-7 class. Both teachers worked 0.8, with the Principal, Mr Jason Sheehy teaching in each class on a Monday and Friday respectively. In 2009, Andrea Fox won a teaching position in the Barossa Valley and therefore will not be with us in 2010.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS
All teachers hold qualifications required for teacher registration in South Australia. Of our teaching staff, 66.6% hold Bachelor of Education Junior Primary / Primary degree and we are fortunate that 33.3% of teachers hold a Diploma of Teaching and a Graduate Diploma of Language.

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
All teaching staff participated in many hours of professional learning throughout the year. All staff are interested in professional development to continually increase and update their skills to make the learning interesting and engaging for the students and to improve student learning outcomes. The professional learning focused primarily on
our site priorities. Approximately $235 per teacher was spent on professional learning throughout the year including such professional learning as Conflict Resolution, Big Ideas in Number (B.I.N) Project, Aboriginal Cultural Awareness, Responding to Abuse and Neglect, Margaret Menner – Junior Primary Spelling Workshop, CPR training and the development of an “Approach to Spelling”. Although Spelling was a strong T & D focus in 2009, the majority of sessions were run ‘in house’ between Blanchetown, Morgan and Cadell Primary Schools and therefore there was minimal cost involved.

2009 Grants

2009 saw the completion and implementation of several grants.

- The Water and Energy Savings Grant from the previous year was completed and acquitted. Rainwater tanks, water saving devices such as waterless urinals and timer taps were installed, water efficient irrigation systems were installed and a pool blanket to reduce evaporation was purchased. All the money was acquitted in 2009.
- In late 2008, the Riverland Small Schools Network (Blanchetown, Cadell, Morgan and Ramco Primary Schools) successfully applied to be accepted into the Numeracy Professional Learning Program: Module 1, the big ideas in Number. The program will develop and implement whole school plans and strategies that focus and develop on student understandings of number while at the same time deepening our own understandings of mathematics and understanding how students learn about number. The program required the commitment that each site would provide a financial amount to release one person from within the four sites to act as a Lead Teacher throughout 2009 and 2010. We were fortunate enough to secure some funding from Regional Office (Berri) to help pay for the lead teachers’ release time.
- We were also fortunate enough to receive $50 thousand dollars as part of the Building the Education Revolution – School Pride. This money saw the erection of a shade structure over the playground, kangaroo proof fencing installed around the oval, tubular fencing erected around the remainder of the school, building 2 painted inside and outside and some internal fencing replaced and erected to ensure that the students were kept safe and out of harm’s way of any traffic.
- Blanchetown Primary School was also accepted into round 3 of Building the Education Revolution – Schools for the 21st Century. We were able to secure $250k for a new building. In March 2010, we will take delivery of a new building which will become our Library. I have negotiated with DECS and the builders that it will also house a kitchen to be utilised for student cooking. The building will also have two withdrawal rooms – one will be a meeting room and the other will be used as a storage room – dedicated to Science / Technology to free up some space in the existing Art room.

2009 has been a very successful year for the students, staff and families. As a school community we should be proud of our achievements and successes and will endeavour to further strengthen these achievements in 2010. These celebrations of success, progress, experiences and opportunities contribute to make Blanchetown Primary School a great place to work, learn and play.