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Principal's foreword

Introduction

Bwgcorman Community School is a P-10 State School on beautiful Palm Island east of Ingham.

The challenges that face students and their teachers on a daily basis ensure school is never dull.

Students love their school but very few of them are able to attend every day. Family issues that impact on attendance mainly stem from issues of poverty and neglect. Very few students arrive at school every day having had breakfast or have with them their lunch for the day.

But every student of Palm Island brings to school a virtual school bag of knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage. Children on Palm are able to live close to the land and the sea and learn very young to hunt and gather.

Our challenge as educators is to bridge the gap quickly between this cultural knowledge and learning and mainstream society's concept of knowledge and learning.

A significant challenge in our context is the lack of experienced teachers to guide this journey of transition. The vast majority of our teachers are in the first years of their career. Therefore as fast as we train and guide a group of professionals they leave and a new group arrives. The significant number of local indigenous staff members working in our school helps us to bridge this gap with Community.

The sense of mutual trust that is implicit in other school communities therefore, is not existent in this context because adults do not stay long enough to be able to build on this foundation.

Future outlook

Hard work on curriculum development and the explicit teaching of literacy in a concentrated time period in the morning of each school day, should see increased results for the small number of our students who come to school every day.

With the development of an Attendance MOU with all key stakeholders on Palm Island in 2008 we hope to see many more of our students attending 5 days a week.

Our school at a glance

School Profile

Total student enrolments for school: 339

Year levels offered: Pre-Prep- Year 10

Coeducational School

Curriculum offerings

Our distinctive curriculum offerings:

- The school offered a Pre-Prep program in 2008
- The school offers a full time Prep program
- What we teach (curriculum) at Bwgc Colman Community school is a two way strong curriculum. We cover seven Key Learning areas through stand alone English and Numeracy programs and integrated units with all 7 KLAs. We are guided by the Mt Isa District Curriculum and our Bwgc Colman Cultural Curriculum.
- We believe in a culturally appropriate approach to the curriculum. This is well supported by our Indigenous Educational assistants and is well resourced.
- Our High School curriculum has stand alone English (literacy) and Mathematics (numeracy) programs. The other KLAs are taught through integrated units.
- Pre-vocational programs are also taught in the High school.
- Men's and women's business is also taught.
- The primary classes were grouped in the early childhood group (junior), the middle group and the upper group. The children in the junior group were placed in classes based on developmental and age levels. The children in the middle and upper groups followed a more traditional grouping of age appropriateness. There are a few exceptions.

Extra curricula activities

- There are very few opportunities for children to participate in extra curricular activities on the Island.

How computers are used to assist learning

Bwgc Colman Community School values highly the use of computer technology in our school. The school has two computer labs, computers available in the Resource Centre and computers in the classrooms. The school has a technician through workplace reform.

Our Junior school learns the basics of the computer including e-mails and web pages.

As the children progress they are taught more subject explicit computer skills.

Children can have access to the computers after school by arrangement and every lunch break.

Social climate

In the 2008 school survey 82% of secondary students and 97% of primary students surveyed were happy to come to this school. However responses to the survey questions about behaviour and discipline by both students and parents showed there is a concern in these areas.

Bwgc Colman Community school aims to meet the individual needs of our children. Children who do bring outside issues into the classroom will disrupt the learning environment of his/her peers. Social factors which may affect our children's lives are the overcrowding in housing, forms of neglect including food, family disputes or violence or simply lack of sleep.

Whilst the school has limited control over these issues, the Cultural Committee recognises the negative effect it has

Our school at a glance

on the children's learning. The team tries to monitor students who are at risk and 'yarn' with them when they are behaving inappropriately. The Indigenous team has received training in basic 'yarning' (counselling), anger management, grief and loss and other skills needed when 'yarning with children.

Our whole school *Student Responsible Behaviour Plan* was developed by the Supportive School Environment Committee. This plan clearly outlines the values that underpin the plan and the expectation of the students. This was fully implemented in 2007. It will be reviewed in 2009.

Involving parents in their child's education.

Involving parents in their child's education is seen by the whole community as a most important goal to improve outcomes in our context. Some parents on Palm island still have very negative memories of their own school days and are reluctant to be involved at school activities.

Parents are also reluctant to participate because they feel inadequate or that it is not their responsibility.

The school has tried a number of initiatives with various degrees of success with termly *Suburb Meetings* achieving the best results. Parent Open Evenings have also been trialled in 2008 with some success.

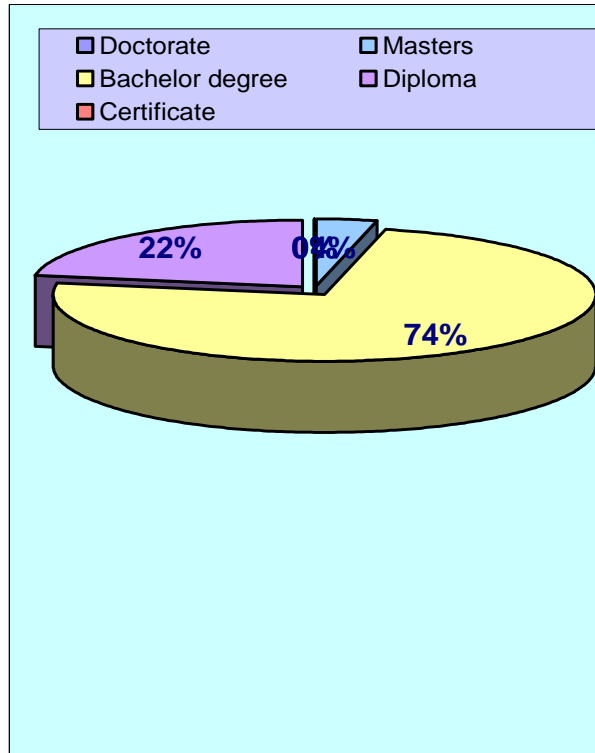
The school reports to parents twice a year although parent teacher interviews are poorly attended. The school Advisory Board has a number of parent representatives and several community members. This allows them to participate in the decision making processes and share information with families.

Efforts will continue to see further advances in parent participation in their children's education.

Our staff profile

Qualifications of all teachers.

Highest level of attainment	Number of classroom teachers and school leaders at the school
Doctorate	0
Masters	1
Bachelor degree	20
Diploma	6
Certificate	0



Expenditure on and teacher participation in professional development.

- The total funds expended on teacher professional development in 2008 was \$22 603.40 .
- The major professional development initiatives are as follows: Literacy Training, Cultural Awareness Training, Induction training for new Staff.
- The involvement of the teaching staff in professional development activities during 2008 was 81 %.

Average staff attendance

- For permanent and temporary staff and school leaders the staff attendance rate was 95% in 2008.

Proportion of staff retained from the previous school year.

- From the end of the 2007 school year, 80 % of staff were retained by the school for the entire 2008 school year.

Performance of our students

Student attendance

The average attendance rate as a percentage in 2008 was 71 %.

Key outcomes

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	260	325	398	451
	Average score for Queensland	371.1	466.1	528.1	568.2
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	32 %	16 %	11 %
Writing	Average score for the school	229	303	312	339
	Average score for Queensland	391.8	468.9	522.7	555.3
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	46 %	17 %	6 %
Spelling	Average score for the school	230	346	389	421
	Average score for Queensland	366.7	462.0	528.0	567.8
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	32 %	34 %	33 %
Grammar and Punctuation	Average score for the school	217	257	346	427
	Average score for Queensland	370.4	476.6	518.0	563.2
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	28 %	6 %	0 %
Numeracy	Average score for the school	241	336	419	494
	Average score for Queensland	367.9	458.2	539.0	570.7
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	32 %	17 %	46 %

Results in the Year 2 Diagnostic Net

	Percentage of students not requiring additional support
Reading	26%
Writing	24%
Number	18%

Performance of our students

Value added

Overall our results show a need to have a whole of community approach to our children's learning particularly with our Attendance Strategy. Unless we can get our students to school every day they will make little real academic progress but will be in constant 'catch up' mode.

Because our community is an oral community, that is print or media do not play as big a role in the every day lives of people on the Island as it does in main stream, there is the need to set priorities or goals starting from our young children. Oral language and play programs for our early childhood children will make our children strong orally in both languages or at least aware before they enter school.

At school the results show that we must not only focus on teaching strategies and content, but on the whole child.

As a result of the 2008 data the school will focus on the following:

- literacy and numeracy focused teaching- and *Making The Jump*.
- training of teachers and tutors in the teaching of reading
- health issues including nutrition and hygiene.
- social skills training
- attendance issues
- 'yarning' (counselling) with young people at risk.
- Including parents in discussions regarding their children's learning.

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction with the school

The school surveys in 2008 were completed by a random sample of 22 parents, 43 staff members and 43 students.

68% of parents were satisfied or very satisfied that this was a good school. The remaining parents had issues with being able to participate in decision making, informing them about their child and the behaviour of some of the students.

The school continues to address these issues through a process of parent /suburb meetings and to develop a case management (*Individual Learning Plan*) model for individual students.

The surveys also showed that 73% of secondary students and 84% of primary students were satisfied or very satisfied that this was a good school. The other students main concern was the behaviour of some students which might have contributed to the data on how students didn't feel safe at school.

The school is addressing these issues through the School's *Student Responsible Behaviour Plan in 2008*.

61% of the staff surveys were satisfied or very satisfied that they were happy to work at this school. Some facilities issues and workplace organisation aspects concerned staff.

It is hoped in 2009 that our student results in NAPLAN testing will improve. In all strands of every test we aim for every student to improve by at least one band. By 2012 we would like 50% of our students to be above the national minimum standards in all areas.