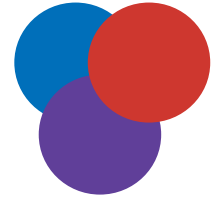




Education

The Ponds School Annual Report



2015



The Ponds School
Believe Learn Achieve

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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2015 is provided to the community of The Ponds School as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.



The Annual Report describes the school's high quality practices across the three domains of the School Excellence Framework of learning, teaching and leading. For more information about the School Excellence Framework please visit: <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-the-department/our-reforms/school-excellence-framework>.

Leonie Donaldson
Principal

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Message from the Principal

Wednesday 28th January 2015 was a very momentous and memorable day for the entire Ponds School community. This was the first day at our new purpose built school for our ninety-nine students and thirty-seven staff. Much planning took place to ensure that this important day was as organised and streamlined as possible. A transition video was created for students and parents to view. The video included a virtual tour of the school and introduced the staff. Vital policies and procedures were in place ensuring arrival, departure and break times were successful. Staff were prepared and resources were in place. All sixteen classrooms were a-buzz with learning.

We welcomed Greg Wood, Deputy Principal; Kim McDonald, Assistant Principal; Liz Rixon, Kate McLeod and Dee Malik, Class Teachers; Beatta Jurkiewicz, Leanne Harrison, LeeAnn Kocas and Karen White, School Learning Support Officers.

Our school community settled into our fantastic facilities. Weekly assemblies, Zumba lessons and a range of activities were held in the hall. Hydrotherapy, water safety and swimming lessons took place in our hydrotherapy pool. Much sought after facilities for break times included the bike track, half basketball court, Liberty swing, Sway Fun boat, sensory panel, wheelchair accessible sand pit and water play station.

Lessons took place in the library, special programs room and kitchen. Music engagement occurred in the sensory room. The sensory garden and raised gardens/BBQ area were used for Science and picnic

lunches. As with all new buildings we had a few defects that were resolved throughout the year. Our technology needed to match our state-of-the-art school: Tap Its, Comm Boxes, laptops, iPads, WiFi, PA systems, phones in every room, swipe cards for quick access to gates and doors, infrared beams that secure the surface of the pool and duress alarms in bathrooms – so we were up-to-date with technology.

At The Ponds School we have high expectations of all our students. We pride ourselves on having a focus on Person Centred Planning; English; Maths and Creative and Performing Arts. Each student took part in English and Maths assessments. From the results of these assessments specific skills were targeted and results showed that the majority of students increased their knowledge and skills.

2015 proved to be a first for a range of Creative and Performing Arts activities. Selected students attended drama lessons on a weekly basis which culminated in a performance at the Riverside Theatres where The Ponds School students were the youngest performers.

The school dance group and signing choir were formed and regular practice sessions took place throughout the year. The dance group performed at Tallowood School along with other schools and were presented with an award for costuming. The signing choir joined with students from Riverbank PS and successfully performed at the Ridges Festival.

Partnerships were formed with John Palmer PS, Riverbank PS, Riverstone PS and The Ponds HS supporting integration programs and teacher professional learning. Our school charity, *Making it Happen – for students with disabilities Inc.*, had a full year of raising funds for The Ponds School.

Thank you all for working tirelessly to create improved outcomes for our students.

Our strategic directions for the 2015-2017 School Plan are:

1. Connecting and empowering the school community
2. Leading innovative differentiated teaching and learning
3. Creating highly skilled, confident and resilient leaders

School background

School vision statement

“The Ponds School provides quality individualised and meaningful education in a safe and caring environment. The Ponds School supports families, encourages independence and assists students to become valued members of the community now and into the future.”

School context

The Ponds School was established in 2012 at a temporary site on the grounds of Riverstone HS with 24 students in 4 classes. There have been extensive changes since then.

The Ponds School is a newly built School for Specific Purposes located in The Ponds. The school had an enrolment of 99 students ranging from K-6 and will eventually be K-12. All students have a moderate or severe intellectual disability. Many of our students have complex needs such as Autism, challenging behaviours, physical disabilities and health care needs. Each student has a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) developed in collaboration with families, therapists and other key stakeholders, which works towards the achievement of person centred goals and outcomes from the NSW Syllabus. The Ponds School is a Positive

Behaviour for Learning (PBL) school and has established Learning Support and Wellbeing teams. All members of staff are committed to the Quality Teaching Framework and work collaboratively.

Currently the school is at capacity with 16 classes. At the beginning of 2015, 9 new staff (4 School Learning Support Officers, 3 Teachers, 1 Assistant Principal and 1 Deputy Principal) were appointed.

Due to the diverse geographical areas that our school community call home, building strong relationships with our school community was a priority. 2016 will be the first year The Ponds School will have high school aged students.

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, our school achievements and the next steps to be pursued. The Framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

The Ponds School staff worked on developing a rationale, evidence and a plan for the future. The Framework enabled the staff to identify the current strengths and areas of development for the school, determine the broad expanse of programs, policies and procedures in place and identify priorities to ensure that we continue on our journey towards excellence. The feedback gained and the knowledge of the staff is a positive outcome for a young and growing school.

Learning

There was a strong commitment from all staff to engage students in their learning by differentiating the curriculum. Expectations of behaviour were taught using Positive Behaviour for Learning strategies. New school policies and procedures specific to our new school site supported learning.

2015 saw the formal introduction of Wellbeing at The Ponds School. The initial focus was on the wellbeing of staff and how that would lead to improved student outcomes. There was a strong whole school community focus on Positive Behaviour for Learning. The Ponds School recognises, celebrates and respects cultural identity and diversity throughout the curriculum. The entire school staff participated in a range of Professional Learning.

The Ponds School is an active member of several learning alliances and networks. 2015 saw twenty-seven new students enrol at The Ponds School. A transition program with a range of activities, resources and learning opportunities saw the smooth transition to a new school for ninety-nine students. The Ponds School makes every endeavour to involve parents/caregivers and key stakeholders in the development of their child's Personalised Learning Plan. The Learning Support Team was established and policy and procedures implemented.

The Ponds School collected a range of internal and external data that was analysed and reported on. Student's reports were individualised. Discussions with parents were ongoing through the communication book on a daily basis and at Personalised Learning Plan and parent teacher meetings twice a year. The school used Best Start data and a range of literacy assessments to pinpoint trends and student achievement levels. Parents and caregivers received a weekly journal with photos and captions of what and how students learnt.

Reflection on Personalised Learning Plans, school reports and assessment data demonstrated students were achieving value-added results. Staff worked towards ensuring each student gained a year of

improvement (on an individual basis) within the school year. All students demonstrated improvement/growth on relevant and individualised performance measures.

Teaching

The effectiveness of teaching practices was evaluated regularly through a collaborative approach with therapists, support staff, colleagues within collegiate support teams, quality teaching rounds, team teaching, fortnightly professional learning and the collection and use of data to inform and guide teaching and programming. At The Ponds School we provided explicit, specific and timely feedback to students. We constantly used specific verbal praise to gain the outcomes we wanted to see.

All students had a Personalised Learning Plan developed in collaboration with families and key stakeholders. Teachers used data to inform programs and assess students' progress within each curriculum area and progress towards the individual learning goals of each student. During 2016 we will review how we communicate student achievement data to the school community.

The Performance Development Framework was introduced and implemented in 2015. Collegiate support teams met on a weekly basis to improve teaching and learning by discussing programs, students' behaviour, resources and strategies. Teachers completed their Performance Development Plans. To support this Performance Development Plan process, it was integral that all executive had knowledge and skills in the areas of coaching and mentoring. The Ponds School identified staff expertise and utilised this through the Roles and Responsibilities for all staff.

Professional Learning took many forms at The Ponds School. It was delivered during weekly staff meetings, Collegiate Support Team meetings, at structured Professional Learning meetings, network meetings and at external professional learning courses. During 2015 Literacy and Numeracy were a focus. Many teachers attended external courses to gain greater knowledge of Literacy and Numeracy and then shared this information with their peers.

The Ponds School had a whole school approach to targeted professional learning and accreditation. Embedded within teachers' Performance Development Plans were elements/indicators from the Teacher Professional Standards. Accreditation meetings within the school were held regularly and a majority of teachers attended external professional learning or online professional learning on accreditation. Within classrooms, teachers demonstrated innovative and best practices that came from sharing current research and attending professional learning.

Leading

The Ponds School community valued the welcoming culture of the school. Strong productive relationships were forged with a range of local retail and professional businesses, national charities and foundations. School capacity building was a focus and this will continue into the future. Feedback from our community was requested and gained on school performance.

The school leadership team used various forms of data to inform decisions. Through the development of each students' Personalised Learning Plan it was seen that the school had high expectations and valued equity in learning for all. The collection and analysis of learning and development data to review annual performance required further development and refining to ensure the individual needs of students were taken into consideration.

Resources were constantly being established to keep up with the growing school population. As a newly established and growing school, the curriculum focus was on Literacy and Numeracy however all

curriculum areas were initiated, implemented and evaluated. Celebrating achievements was a focus at The Ponds School, a range of celebratory activities took place regularly throughout the year. The executive team were all trained to support teachers through the accreditation process. Teachers successfully completed the entire process of their Performance Development Plans and all beginning teachers were working on the process of accreditation.

The School Plan is available to the whole school community and the school is following legislative requirements and obligations. The school management team follow Department of Education policies and procedures. The school report to the community in a number of ways including the school website, newsletters, Facebook page, communication books, journals, verbally, inviting the community into the school and through reporting. All school staff receive regular training which includes Departmental and school policies and procedures and administrative systems.

Our self-assessment process will further assist the school to refine the strategic priorities in our School plan leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.



Strategic Direction 1

Connecting and empowering the school community

Purpose

To build stronger purposeful relationships as an educational community by leading and inspiring a culture of collaboration and trust. To empower students, families, agencies and staff to engage meaningfully with their community.

Overall summary of progress

The Ponds School offered students a range of extracurricular activities that enabled students to engage with the broader community. Connections with the whole school community were enhanced through Special Events held each term. Parents and caregivers were surveyed to gain information regarding relevant topics and timings for parent information meetings. This data informed decisions about Parent Information Meetings and topics which included the School Plan and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The Ponds School has formed a network with The Ponds High School, Riverbank Drive PS, John Palmer PS and Riverstone PS. Students from The Ponds School accessed these schools for integration. Students from these schools have also participated in reverse integration at our school and assisted during our Move-a-thon.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	<\$>
An increased percentage of all students/ families connected with appropriate services and their community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baseline data was collected on appropriate services including the percentage of students currently accessing services:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Physiotherapist 14%○ Speech Pathologist 26%○ Occupational Therapist 14%○ Psychologist/Behavioural Therapist 15%○ Paediatrician 9%○ Case worker/manager 6%• Parents and caregivers connected with our school by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Attending parent information meetings○ Participating in Personalised Learning Plan Meetings and Parent Teacher Nights○ Joining in Special Events including Harmony Day, World's Greatest Shave and Go Colourful for Autism, NAIDOC day○ Assisting with Community Access – Riding for the Disabled, Shopping, Parks, Sailing○ Supporting the Art Exhibition and sale○ Attending the Beyond ABBA performance at the Riverside Theatres and the Signing choir performance at the Ridges Festival○ Reading our Newsletter, website and Facebook page• Fundraising and events organised by the school	\$6,208

Strategic Direction 1

	<p>based charity; Making it Happen - for children with disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Open Day ○ Comedy for a Cause ○ Celebration Fun Day ○ Twilight Markets 	
Entire school staff actively engaged within their professional community.	<p>Collaborative professional learning and programming with network schools</p> <p>Blacktown Area Special Education Network (BASEN) termly meetings</p> <p>Blacktown Learning Community (BLC)</p> <p>Norwest Hub</p> <p>Working with parents, therapists, volunteers, medical students and practice students.</p> <p>Special Education Principal and Leaders Association (SEPLA)</p> <p>The Hills Principals Network</p> <p>SASSPA</p>	\$6,631

Next steps

In 2016 100% of our students' families will be given the opportunity to apply for NDIS funding. Our trial of the Working with Therapists' policy will be used by all class teachers. Data will be taken regarding the percentage of students accessing therapy and other relevant services. The impact on the increased number of therapists visiting the school will be investigated.

Integration will continue and expand by more students accessing integration, selected students attending for whole school days, reverse integration for Special Events and curriculum based activities.

The Ponds School will continue to be an integral part of the Norwest Hub, BASEN, BLC, SEPLA, SASSPA and The Hills Principals Network. These professional relationships will expand and be collaborative.

We will continue to communicate with the entire school community using various paper and electronic mediums. In 2016 selected students will be working on Blogs.



Leading innovative, differentiated teaching and learning

Purpose

To develop and sustain a culture of high expectations, inquiry and innovation; using and creating evidence-based practices through reflection and collaboration and to provide quality individualised, meaningful education in a safe and caring environment.

Overall summary of progress

Differentiated teaching and learning promoted through the use of TEN and PLAN. Our ESES Numeracy Project originated from a need for a continuum of learning that was evidence and research based for students who did not meet up with the PLAN continuum. Teachers have improved their professional knowledge by deepening their understanding of how students with special education needs learn best and how to adjust the curriculum so they can access age and stage appropriate outcomes. The new Science curriculum and Working Technologically were presented to the teachers; all collegiate support teams used these syllabi to program. The Performance and Development Framework was presented to teachers. The executive completed professional learning on Coaching and Mentoring and worked with their collegiate support teams on developing individuals' Performance Development Plans. Throughout 2015 an extensive range of professional learning was presented on a weekly basis. Teachers were trained to present SENA 1 and 2, Best Start and a range of Literacy assessments such as: The Bridge, ERSI and the QRI. Teachers also participated in professional learning on Total Communication.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	<\$>
An increased percentage of all students achieving IEP goals.	Baseline data on the number of students that have achieved their IEP goal is 36% 73% of parents had face to face PLP meetings	\$25,069
All school staff collaborating to implement meaningful individualised programs.	100% of students have PLP goals that were developed through collaboration with parents/caregivers and the classroom teacher. Collegiate support teams participate in collaborative programming and assessment. Several Collegiate Support Teams completed Quality Teaching Rounds and teachers reported that the feedback was positive, constructive and lead to changes in their practice. Through collaboration with The Ponds School executive and University of Western Sydney ICT students a web based tool was developed for Planning, Programing and Reporting suited to the particular needs of our school.	\$22,690

Strategic Direction 2

An increased percentage of staff using evidence-based practices.

Most students are plotted using PLAN continuums for Literacy and Numeracy
See PLAN data
SENA 1 & 2
Best Start
Literacy Assessments – ERSI, Bridge, QRI

Next steps

In 2016 the whole school will trial the Planning, Programming and Reporting tool. It will allow teachers to share programs and more readily adapt what others have written. This collaboration will provide the school with a collection of programs for future use.

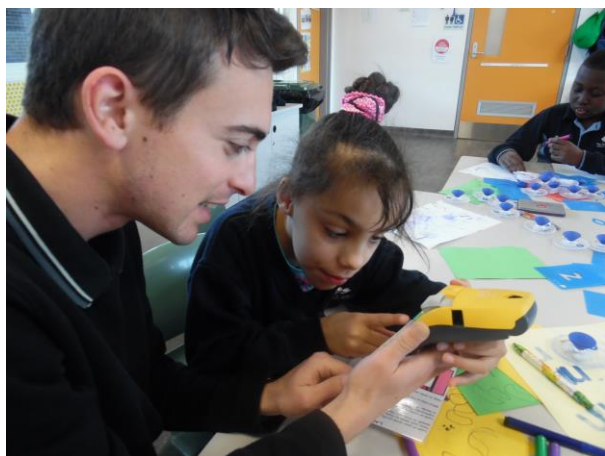
In 2016 a focus on Quality Teaching Rounds for Numeracy will take place in term 2 and for Literacy in term 3. Count Me In Too will be introduced to selected students. A greater number of staff will use Best Start, TEN and SENA 1 & 2.

The ESES and the Mathematics teams will source, trial and evaluate a range of programs and resources. The Mathematics team will also trial a variety of Mathematics assessment tools and introduce project based learning covering a range of mathematical concepts in a sequenced order in line with the Scope and Sequence developed by the ESES Project Team.

The Literacy team will be investigating a range of programs and resources including Multilit, Minilit and Prelit, that will be trialed and evaluated as to their suitability.

The Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES) program to support the teaching and learning of students with disabilities and additional needs will be trialed.

The new Geography and History syllabi will be unpacked by staff during professional learning.



Creating highly skilled, confident and resilient leaders

Purpose

To develop leaders at all levels of the school community (students, staff and community) with a capacity to inspire, lead and sustain exceptional practice now and into the future.

Overall summary of progress

The school supported three casual and temporary staff to begin the accreditation process and three permanent teachers and executives that gained accreditation or maintained their accreditation. Two beginning teachers gained accreditation. There were four teachers accessing Beginning Teacher's funding. Collaborative planning processes were utilised within the community of schools and within collegiate support teams. The wellbeing framework was introduced to the school, initially there was a staff focus and a range of strategies were explored. Policies were developed including: hydrotherapy, attendance, working alone, emergency management plan, first aid plan and incident reporting. Mandatory DoE policies were presented to the school community. Positive Behaviour for Learning was updated on the website, in the newsletter and on the school Facebook page. Collegiate support teams met weekly. Many teachers have stated goals in the Personal Development Plans to enhance their leadership capabilities and coaching and mentoring skills.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	<\$>
An increased number of teachers report that they feel more confident, resilient and have gained skills to take on leadership roles and responsibilities.	<p>Baseline data on staff wellbeing was gained through a survey.</p> <p>Overall happiness at The Ponds School (43 responses) very high- 30.23%; high 32.56%; average 34.88%; low 2.33%; very low 0</p> <p>Stress levels at The Ponds School (34 responses) very high 5.88%; high 26.47%; average 41.18%; low 18.6%; very low 2.94%</p> <p>Leadership opportunities at The Ponds School (33 responses) very high 24.24%; high 36.36%; average 30.30%; low 6.06%; very low 3.03%</p> <p>Confident, resilient and skillful teachers are more likely to apply for and gain leadership roles. This year three teachers were successful in gaining Assistant Principal positions through expressions of interest. Staff have volunteered to teach a student with extremely challenging behaviours. The ESES team are working closely with a range of DoE staff, university staff and staff from independent schools. Within school there was regular, relevant PL ensuring teachers have the</p>	\$202,779

Strategic Direction 3

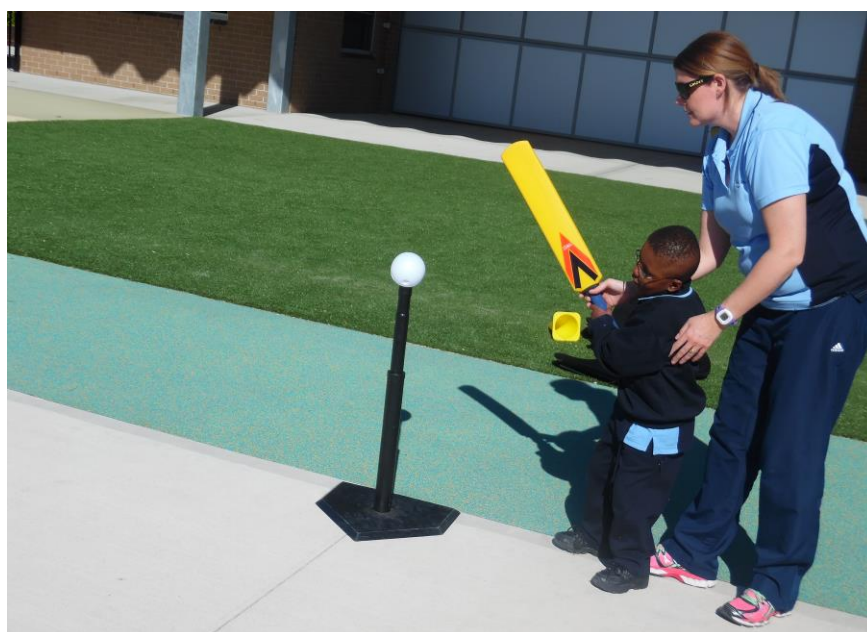
	skills and knowledge they need to be resilient and confident. Two teachers from the CAPA team organized an Art exhibition, rehearsed a signing choir to perform at Ridges Festival and worked with Drama coaches to learn skills and perform at Riverside Theatres. A casual teacher going through the accreditation process organised the Special Children's Christmas Party excursion. The executive successfully supported teachers throughout the Performance Development Framework.	
Increased number of teachers gaining accreditation at Highly Accomplished and Lead.	Through the use of the AITSL survey and NESLI website several staff were identified as ready to begin the process of gaining accreditation at Highly Accomplished or Lead. Teachers have participated in Professional Learning in regards to Highly Accomplished and Lead accreditation levels; they have increased their knowledge and awareness and are ready to begin the process of accreditation in 2016.	\$22,084
An increased percentage of students taking on leadership roles and additional responsibilities.	Students completed the following: Raising and lowering the flags, participating in the signing choir and Ridges Festival, participating in dance group, one of our students dancing with his family at our NAIDOC event, Positive Behaviour for Learning.	\$770
An increased percentage of parents take on advocacy roles for their child.	<p>The introduction of the NDIS has ensured that parents take on advocacy roles for their child. 25% of students were eligible to apply for the NDIS during 2015.</p> <p>Baseline data:</p> <p>17% of parents attended the Triple P Parenting course run by the school counsellor.</p> <p>During 2015 there were seven Parent Information meetings held. The minimum number of participants was 5 and the maximum was 20. The topics covered were; gaining relevant information in regards to parent needs, Communication, Applied Behaviour Intervention, Positive Behaviour for Learning, Learning Support Team, Wellbeing, Hydrotherapy, School Plan and Stepping Stones training.</p> <p>Parents volunteer in various programs across the school including hydrotherapy, community access and special event days.</p> <p>73 % of parents attended face to face Personalised Learning Plan meetings with their child's teacher.</p>	\$1873

Strategic Direction 3

Next steps

During 2016 the Department of Education's Wellbeing Framework for schools will be introduced to students and staff. Wellbeing is a focus for 2016 and teachers will be attending professional learning courses and sharing knowledge with staff. Staff will increase their confidence, skills, resilience and knowledge and work towards achieving accreditation, take on leadership roles within the school and apply for leadership roles through merit selection. Teachers will continue to work towards proficient, highly accomplished and lead. Students will be encouraged to take up leadership roles and responsibilities, such as being a part of signing choir and performing at different venues and singing the National Anthem at assembly. Parent Information meetings will be held throughout 2016 on relevant topics.

100 % of students will be eligible for NDIS funding throughout 2016.



Key initiatives and other school focus areas

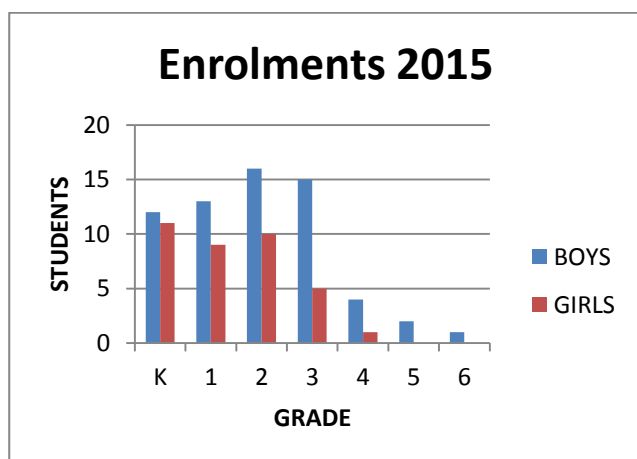
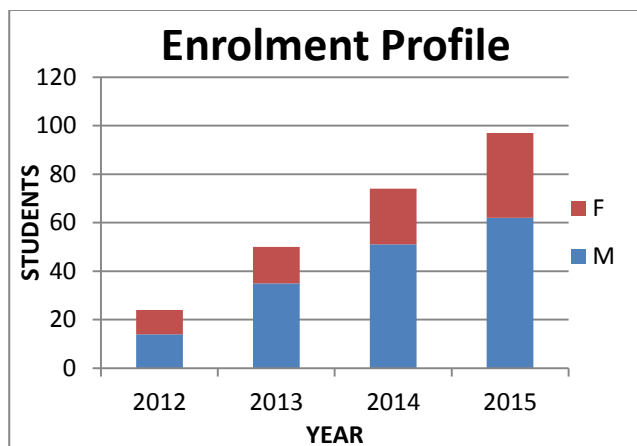
Key initiatives (annual)	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
Aboriginal background funding Personalised Learning Plan development Professional Learning NAIDOC Day Subsidising excursions, incursions and extracurricular activities as well as school uniforms for Aboriginal students	Development of Personalised Learning Plans to support individual educational outcomes. Teachers participated in professional learning on 8 Ways and teaching Aboriginal Perspectives. Staff were supported with developing a personal learning pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Art supplies and morning tea for NAIDOC day. Music therapy and/or Zumba for Aboriginal students	\$2,725.40
English language proficiency funding	Implementation assistance for a range of English, language and communication programs through hire of additional staff.	\$11,111
Targeted students support for refugees and new arrivals Funding of school uniforms Kindi Farm	The culmination of a unit of work on Farm Animals was to have the Kindi farm visit the school so the students could see, hear and hold farm animals and baby animals.	\$416.27
Socio-economic funding Funding of school uniforms Subsidising excursions and incursions and extracurricular activities for students whose parents gave permission to attend but were unable to pay the fee.	Payment for school uniforms, Music therapy, Zumba, drama, gym and other excursions and extracurricular activities.	\$3,161.35
Support for beginning teachers 2 first year beginning teachers 3 second year beginning teachers	Targeted Professional Learning Additional release from face-to-face teaching to support programming and collaboration with mentors Purchase of resources	\$13,127.38 First year funding per teacher \$4,042.05 Second year funding per teacher

Mandatory and optional reporting requirements

Student information

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

Student enrolment profile



Student attendance profile

Average student attendance continues to be high at 89%. Some contributing factors to student absences include: students with complex medical conditions and a number of students taking extended leave to visit relatives overseas.

The Ponds School follows DoE and school procedures and seeks advice from parents regarding absences. The Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) visits regularly to check attendance and is consulted when a need arises.

Workforce information

Reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

With the addition of four newly established classes came additional staffing for the 2015 school year. Additional staffing for 2015 included a Deputy Principal, four School Learning Support Officers, three Classroom Teachers and an Assistant Principal. These positions were gained through merit

selection, graduate recruitment or staffing appointment.

All new staff came with a range of previous experience, appropriate skills and knowledge in educating students with disabilities and high support needs.

Workforce composition

Position	Number
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	4
Head Teacher(s)	0
Classroom Teacher(s)	11
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0
Learning and Support Teacher(s)	0
Teacher Librarian	0.6
Teacher of ESL	0
School Counsellor	0
School Administrative & Support Staff	19.432
Other positions	0
Total	39.46

The Australian Education Regulation, 2014 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce.

The Ponds School had no staff who identified as Aboriginal in 2015.

Workforce retention

One teacher gained another position through the merit selection process. One SLSO gained a transfer to a support class within a primary school. One SLSO gained a position external to the DoE for 2016 and will take a year of leave. One Assistant Principal will take a year's leave to pursue teaching opportunities in other parts of NSW.

Teacher qualifications

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

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	35%
Postgraduate degree	65%

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

The entire staff at The Ponds School participated in a number of professional learning activities designed to build the capability of staff to achieve our key priorities as set out in our School Plan. As well, staff have been involved in professional learning programs that have built the capacity of SASS, early career teachers, current teachers, aspiring and current school leaders.

The Ponds School has eight teachers identifying as new scheme and are working towards accreditation or maintaining Board of Studies Teaching and Education Standards (BoSTES) accreditation. Two in their first year, three in their second year, two are casuals and one is maintaining accreditation at Proficient level. Currently, no teachers are actively seeking voluntary accreditation at Highly Accomplished or Lead. At least four teachers are completing preliminary activities before deciding upon seeking voluntary accreditation at Highly Accomplished or Lead.

During 2015 all staff (teachers, School Learning Support Officers and administration staff) participated in a wide variety of professional learning. This included attending courses and conferences, mentoring/coaching and online learning.

The entire school staff participated in the Department of Education mandatory professional learning including: Child Protection, Anaphylaxis, Code of Conduct, Wellbeing, CPR Training, Work Health and Safety overview, Evacuation, Lockout and Lockdown, Disability Standards for Education, Nonviolent Crisis Intervention, Performance Development Framework and Therapeutic Aquatic Training.

Professional Learning completed for the teaching staff included: Introduction to the new Science and Technology syllabus, PLAN, TEN, Literacy, Reporting, School Plan, School Report and Instructional Rounds.

Professional Learning completed for School Learning Support officers and SASS included: Health Care Procedures, Administration of Prescribed Medication, School Administration Manager conference, Strategic Financial Management and Core Financial Literacy

Professional Learning completed by beginning teachers included: Explicit Instruction, The Traffic Jam in my Brain, Redbank Conference, Bringing Science to Life, Habits of Highly Effective Teachers, Special Education Conference, Working Towards Accreditation, Managing Challenging Behaviour, Engaging students with disabilities, Maths from the very beginning, Communication devices and Eye Gaze, Creative Connections, K-6 Early career teachers-Know the content and how to teach it, Adobe Premier Elements for teachers and Teaching physical activity to students with disabilities.



Financial information

Financial summary

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

A full copy of the school's 2015 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

Date of financial summary	30/11/2015
Income	\$
Balance brought forward	229660.35
Global funds	370233.34
Tied funds	270076.78
School & community sources	65122.01
Interest	5742.48
Trust receipts	83929.10
Canteen	0.00
Total income	1024764.06
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	144136.43
Excursions	30391.39
Extracurricular dissections	27359.37
Library	1769.22
Training & development	20286.21
Tied funds	179390.95
Casual relief teachers	114823.77
Administration & office	96943.88
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	72903.89
Maintenance	34117.85
Trust accounts	42778.39
Capital programs	24309.72
Total expenditure	789211.07
Balance carried forward	235552.99

School performance

NAPLAN

In 2015, students in Years 3 and 5 at The Ponds School were exempt from completing NAPLAN.

The *My School* website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing. Click on the link [My School](#) and insert the school name in the *Find a school* and select *GO* to access the school data.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Each year schools are required to seek the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below.

In 2015 our school undertook a review of student reports. As part of this review we sought feedback from parents and staff about current student reports and reporting processes within the school.

Feedback from parents showed that 94.75% of parents look forward to receiving their child's report twice a year. 90% of parents stated they read the entire report from cover to cover. 95% of parents said they find the report is just the right length and 100% of parents said the reports were easy to read with plain English and language they understand.

Further comments from parents have assisted us to ensure reports are providing the information that has the most meaning and relevance to them.

Feedback gained from staff about reporting processes assisted in identifying areas that could be streamlined and also supported the development of a school-wide Planning, Programming, Assessment and Reporting tool in collaboration with Western Sydney University which will be trialed across the school in 2016.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

The Ponds School Aboriginal Education Policy reflects the views and values of Aboriginal people on education and is designed to promote educational achievements for Aboriginal students and to educate all students about Aboriginal Australia.

The Ponds School Aboriginal Education Policy is also informed by developments in state and national education and training policies and reports on Aboriginal issues. These highlight the importance of literacy skills for Aboriginal students in gaining the necessary foundation for their continuing education and training, and for knowledge of Aboriginal Australia to be integrated into all school curricula.

Monitoring the delivery and outcomes of Aboriginal education programs and educational services to Aboriginal students is fundamental to the achievement of equity and social justice.

The Ponds School Aboriginal Education Policy provides a framework for taking up this challenge. The focus of this policy is the delivery of quality

teaching and learning programs in our school for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students alike, and the development of strategic initiatives.

One teacher attended the 8 ways of Aboriginal Pedagogy professional learning.

Multicultural Education and Anti-racism

During 2015 The Ponds School has celebrated cultural diversity through community/school open days. These have included, NAIDOC Day and Harmony Day. The Ponds School is committed to Multicultural education with culturally inclusive school wide and classroom practices.

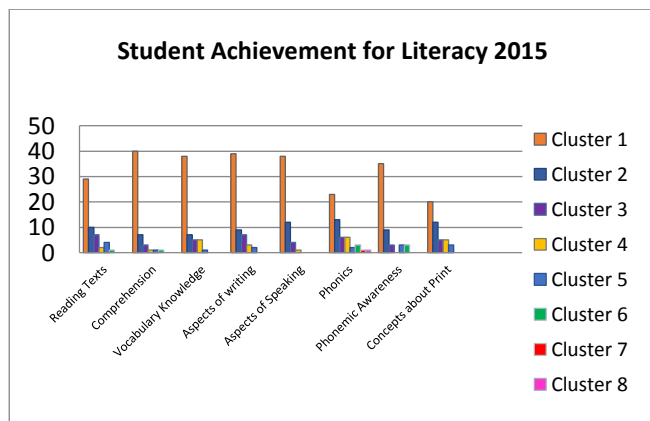
Two students received refugee funding. This money was spent on technology, communication aides, play equipment and books.

The Ponds School has two trained and appointed Anti-racism officers. During 2015 there were zero reported incidences of racism.

PLAN – Planning for Literacy and Numeracy

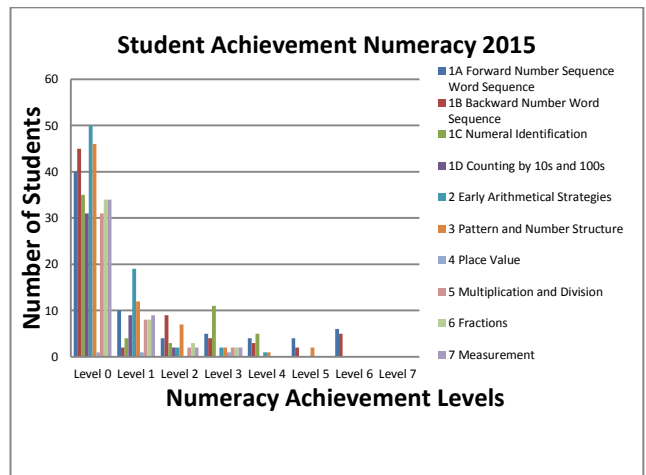
During 2015, PLAN (Planning for Literacy & Numeracy) continued to be embedded for the second year across the whole School. This consisted of teachers plotting their students on each of the continuums of learning twice a year in Literacy and once a term for Numeracy. Most Collegiate Support Teams, included Literacy and Numeracy learning plans in their programs. The Aspects and Clusters related to the Outcomes in the syllabi were also evident and visible in most learning programs.

From a survey given to full time and relief teachers 42% of teachers reported a basic understanding of the Aspects and Clusters on the continuums, 14% reported having no understanding, whilst 42% of teachers reported having a sound to deep understanding of them. 47.6% surveyed were using PLAN to guide their teaching and learning.



Student data collected identifies that most students are achieving at Cluster 1 (an Early Stage 1 Level of achievement) for all aspects of Literacy. Students

range from achieving at Early Stage 1, (Cluster 1) to end of Year 1 (Cluster 6) to the end of Year 2 (Cluster 8). Comprehension and Aspects of Writing are areas where most are achieving. Areas for future growth are Phonics, Reading and Concepts of Print.



The data collected shows that almost all students are achieving on the Numeracy Continuum. Most students are achieving between level 0 and level 2 (Early Stage 1 to Stage 1) with some achieving at a Stage 2 level in some areas. Areas identified as student strengths are Forward and Backward Number Sequence and Numeral Identification. These are the aspects where students are scoring the highest. The sequential future area for improvement is Early Arithmetical Strategies which encompasses counting and addition and subtraction, most students are achieving on level 0 or 1 for this.

ESES – Every Student Every School Project

In 2015, the school applied for and was granted a grant to commence research and develop programs and assessments that supported ‘best practice’ in teaching students, especially students with special needs, Mathematics and Numeracy. A team of teachers, Department of Education consultants and Sydney University research partners met regularly to research the development of early mathematical concepts, the continuum of learning students take when acquiring Numeracy and Mathematical concepts and the current research and evidence based Mathematics programs and teaching strategies used in public schools.

Teachers commenced Action Research projects where they collaboratively planned, assessed and taught, across the school, units for some key concepts other than Whole Number. Students were able to learn about new concepts in Mathematics they hadn’t previously been introduced to. Teachers developed their professional knowledge and practice in effective research and evidence based

practices to improve student outcomes in the area of 21st Century, Numeracy and Mathematics. All processes were videoed and will be used for professional learning across the school in 2016. It is planned that the outcomes from this project will be used to support teachers of students with special needs across all settings.

Integration

During 2015, Students at The Ponds School were able to participate in a range of extra-curricular as well as academic integration programs. During terms 3 and 4 students participated in a weekly mathematics program at Riverbank Public School. This program was aimed at lifting the student's early numeracy skills through the program Targeting Early Numeracy (TEN). Both schools worked towards implementing this program. Teachers planned collaboratively and cooperatively taught the classes. Students were able to build their numeracy skills as well as build friendships as they learnt mathematics together each week. Because of the program's success, it is continuing in 2016.

In Term 4, students had the opportunity to build their skills in the area of Creative Arts. They joined students in stage 1 at John Palmer PS each week participating in Music, Dance and Art classes. Students from both schools were able to build skills and explore interests in areas they hadn't had the chance to before. Both teachers and students were so pleased with the program it is also continuing. Because of the weekly success the students were having, a Reverse Integration program was organised for the end of the year where 122 students from John Palmer participated in creative activities across a morning at The Ponds School.

As well as group integration programs, students also attended individually ranging from part to full days both at John Palmer and Riverstone Public School.

Integration has proven a success for not only the students at The Ponds School but also in the community of schools. Positive partnerships have been made between the schools, students and staff and we look forward to continue working together to enrich the lives of all students in our community.

Other school programs

Our school counsellor was trained in the Stepping Stones Triple P Parenting Program (SSTP) and delivered the program twice in terms 3 & 4 in 2015. SSTP is part of the Triple P parenting program, and has been specially tailored for parents of children with a disability. The three Triple P Seminars covered a range of parenting strategies and skills including:

what is positive parenting; key steps and skills to manage misbehaviour; adapting parenting strategies for children with disabilities and key steps to teaching targeted skills and behaviours. As a part of a national research project completed by The National Health and Medical Research Council, we were able to offer this program for free. 17 parents/caregivers of students at The Ponds School attended the program. In addition, parents from the local schools were also able to benefit from this program including John Palmer PS, Riverstone PS, Riverbank PS and Sherwood Ridge PS. Parents commented that they welcomed new ideas which assisted them to manage situations at home. Teachers commented that it enabled them to strengthen relationships between parents and the school.

2015 was an extremely busy and successful year for our school based charity Making It Happen – for children with disabilities Inc. The organisation grew and had 65 members who contributed to fundraising initiatives. Strong relationships were forged with parents and staff of The Ponds School, the local community and businesses. At the commencement of the year, the charity was granted charitable fundraising approval and during 2015, Making It Happen for children with disabilities Inc. raised over \$20,000 (after expenditure of 21%) for resources and opportunities for students at The Ponds School. The 2015 Annual and Financial Report and Statement may be requested by email: makingithappen@mail.com. During the first Annual General Meeting and Special General Meeting, motions to change the constitution, financial year and the addition of three executive positions were approved. These changes will allow the organisation to better fulfil the obligations required for its day to day running.

The year started by being selected to be represented in the Local Matters campaign at Grill'd restaurant in Rouse Hill, with community support evident and essential in winning this competition. This positive outcome set the tone for amazing results and achievements throughout 2015.

In March, The Ponds School was opened to the public for the first time during our Community Open Day. This event was greeted with much enthusiasm and provided an opportunity for the public to explore the new school campus and gain awareness of the needs of children with disabilities.

The Easter and Christmas Hamper Raffles, now hosted by Making It Happen – for children with

disabilities Inc., were both fully supported through ticket sales and donations, and continue to contribute towards fundraising at The Ponds School. The Cadbury Chocolate drive was another initiative that has been fully embraced by The Ponds School community. A Tupperware and a Scentsy drive were also conducted and organised by some dedicated parents. Both were successful fundraising activities and also provided equipment for use during special programs and as raffle prizes.

Making It Happen – for children with disabilities Inc. was fortunate to be once again invited to participate in The Rouse Hill Town Centre Christmas Wrap Bar. In addition to donations towards the organisation, our presence further increased public awareness of The Ponds School, the needs of students with disabilities and our organisation.

The highlight of 2015 was the Twilight Markets held in November. This event allowed many families and people with disabilities to enjoy a day at the markets, an opportunity which is often unattainable. Although the day required much work to organise the effort was rewarded with numerous glowing reviews for the day. Many stall-holders sold out of stock and achieved record sales results. Both stall-holders and attendees have been asking when the next market day will be held!

Fundraising has not just benefitted The Ponds School by way of resources, it has also allowed us to host opportunities for students. It was with great pleasure that the first student disco was held, with the evening enjoyed by students and parents alike. Opportunities such as this provide for families and students to socialise, build connections and have fun in a safe and familiar environment.

The achievements of students were celebrated in December during the end of year awards assembly. Following this celebration, we were delighted to provide a student fun day, including a jumping castle and baby animal farm experience. A morning tea celebration was also held for families and carers.

We are proud to have been able to provide events that are accessible to all and look forward to providing opportunities in years to come.

It was our great honour to initiate an additional yearly award for students in loving memory of a dear friend and supporter of The Ponds School. The Craig Redgrave Friendship Award, celebrating and recognising a student who has demonstrated many qualities of friendship.

It is only through on-going support and strong partnerships that we have been able to exceed our expectations during the year. Making It Happen – for children with disabilities Inc., was instrumental in the purchase of a second school bus, which seats 21, allowing community access opportunities for a greater number of students and we provided funding for additional wheel-chair restraints to be installed for the new bus. We have assisted in gaining two shade sails to provide greater sun safety and cooler outdoor learning areas within the playground. Whilst these are major projects, it is often the small things that make an immediate difference to students, such as the provision of Freddo Frogs for the chocolate hunt in term 2 and ensuring the supply of ice blocks during days of extreme heat. We will continue to provide funding to The Ponds School as requested and required.

We are especially thankful for the unwavering support of TAG Sydney, FDC Constructions, Lions Club Riverstone branch, Tax Today Blacktown, Rouse Hill Town Centre and Rouse Hill Times, all of whom have contributed to our achievements.

Members have been privileged to witness the on-going personal growth of students academically, socially and increasing their life-skills throughout the year and are excited to watch these achievements continue during 2016.

The dedicated team on the executive committee will continue to work with members, supporters and the wider community in achieving our mission that *“Every child should have every opportunity to achieve their absolute potential.”*

Leonie Donaldson, Deborah Olliffe, Miriam Wakeley, Greg Wood, and Nikhaylah Workman.



Achievements in the arts and sport

Drama (Beyond Abba)

At the start of 2015 selected students at The Ponds School were invited to participate in an external drama program run through Parramatta Riverside Theatres. The program involved eight of our students travelling to Granville each week to be taught by two drama tutors. The students learnt a host of drama techniques, stage management and social skills. The teacher and SLSO who attended with the students were also able to pick up many new skills that they were then able to use within their respective classes. In Term 4 the students took part in a show at The Riverside Theatres with over 100 performers. All of the students performed well in the show and were able to display many of the skills they had learnt throughout the year. We hope in 2016 to continue with the Beyond Abba program and to also have the tutors come to the school and provide lessons in all our classes.

Signing Choir

The signing choir was started in 2014 and consisted of a group of staff members who learnt to sign a song that was designed for the school. In 2015 this choir was expanded to include students from across the school. Students and teachers met in lunchbreaks to practice learning basic signs and the signs for our school song. Following this the school decided to work with Riverbank Primary School to establish a relationship between the two choirs. The students were able to practice together which helped to build social relationships between the students. As a combined choir the schools entered into the Rydges Festival of the Arts. At the event, held at the Hillsong Convention Centre, the combined school choir performed exceedingly well and showed what a great partnership the two schools have made. Towards the end of the year students in the choir were able to perform at school assemblies where our school community was able to see the talents that they possess. In 2016 the choir will continue to grow, learn new songs and be used as a means to establish further relationships with the school community.

Art Exhibition

In 2015 our Arts Committee came up with an idea to create an exhibition/auction to raise money for the school's art programs and to further develop arts programs being run across the school. The idea for the show was to have each class develop an artwork to be auctioned off on the night and for each student to develop their own art work that families could purchase for a small donation. Artists from around the country were also contacted to see

if they would like to donate any of their own pieces for the auction. Training in various art forms was provided to all staff on a professional development day and they were also provided with a variety of ideas to use for their class art works. A specific program based on stencilling was also developed that any staff were able to use if they felt they were having difficulties creating their own. The night itself was a success with the school raising over \$4800 to use for our art programs. Each student at the school created their own art work and the class pieces showed the talents that our students and staff possess.

