



Kindergarten & Playgroup

EDUCATING *the* WHOLE CHILD

Performance Report 2010

Introduction

In response to the Federal Government's requirement that all schools are to report on performance in a number of areas, we are pleased to have this opportunity to present this report. This report is available in hard copy at the school, via the office, and as a pdf file on our website at www.ballaratsteinerschool.com.au

Ballarat Steiner School holds regular open days throughout the year. These occasions are an opportunity for enquiring parents to discuss the school and kindergarten's ethos and teaching practices. We also hold an Autumn fair every year during which all aspects of the school are open for the public and community to experience. This is an important way of showcasing our lovely school and each year we look forward to putting on the best fair we can.

Staffing

At Ballarat Steiner School we provide a stable and secure environment for the child. We have four full-time Teachers who teach prep and composite classes of 1/2, 3/4 and 5/6. We have Specialist Teachers in Music, Eurythmy, Choir, German and Craft. We also have our Senior Teacher in the role of Education Facilitator. The staff retention rate for 2010 from 2009 was 100% with a new staff member joining our team. Of our five full time teachers, two are male and three are female.

We also have a specialist teacher who gives one-to-one guidance to students with additional needs in literacy and numeracy. We also offer Curative Eurythmy and Extra Lesson for those children who require it.

Our Business Manager and valuable administrative staff provide support and general assistance to our teachers. We also have a maintenance and cleaning person, who is our staff OH&S representative.

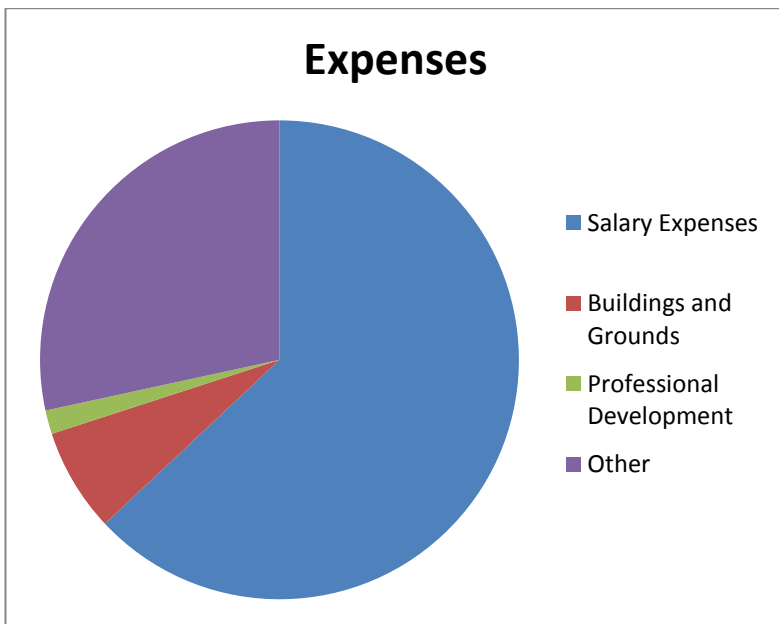
Financials

The 2009 year continued the recent healthy trends for the school. Recurrent costs were steady and capital works did not require any extension to school borrowings.

The percentage breakdowns for 2009 total income were 35% coming from all parents' fees and 60% coming from Commonwealth and State recurrent funding plus a range of grants and other income. \$31,644 was donated to the school from Parents and Friends, together with other income this made up the additional 5%.

Teachers' wages accounted for 63% of total expenditure and other wage costs (administration and building and grounds staff) were 8.6% of total expenditure. Non-salary operating costs were approximately 28.4% of total expenditure, indication generally sensible spending patterns and the commitment to socially responsible salary levels. It would be expected that teachers' wages would take up the major amount of the school expenses, with administration, buildings and grounds staff amounting to only approximately one-quarter of the education-related salaries. As previously reported, the teachers' wages have been incrementally increased to bring wages in line with Victorian State Teaching Awards. The increase began in 2009, with further increases in 2010.

With a bookkeeper, appointed in 2010, bringing additional skills and experience in administrative management, the finance and administration team will continue to improve and develop administration procedures and management practices.



The 2010 financial audit was completed "without qualification". The school continues to improve its forward planning capacity to minimise financial risk in an uncertain financial environment.

- Mr Tim Bunning of Prowse Perrin & Toomey has continued as the Auditor.

Governance

At our AGM in 2010 we voted in new model rules for our Incorporated Association. It allows for the invitation of two parents, two teachers and the Business manager to make up the Committee of Management. There is also the option to invite four members of the community to join the committee to offer specific invaluable advice. The school is grateful for the work done by Ian Stehlik, the ex-business manager of the Orana Steiner School in Canberra and endorsed member of the Rudolf Steiner Schools Association (RSSA) Support Panel, for his assistance in completing the Governance Review. In 2010 our Committee of Management comprised of:

- Ines Kallweit, a parent representative, who holds the position of the Chairperson for the Committee. There were no other parent representatives on the Committee.
- Rhonda Humphries and Ambika Bone as representatives for the College of Teachers.
- Louise Cheslett as the Business Manager.
- Raimond Placidi was invited to join the committee for his financial and marketing expertise
- Damien Gray was invited to join as the school's Architect
- Denise Williams was invited to join as a long term previous parent with the school.

Teacher Qualifications

At Ballarat Steiner School, on our full time staff, there are three with primary qualifications and one teacher with secondary qualifications. Our specialist teachers are qualified and experienced in their respective fields. All teachers are VIT registered.

Together they hold the following qualifications:

Bachelor of Arts Victoria College of the Arts 1983

Graduate Diploma of Education University of Melbourne 1994

Bachelor of Arts Sheffield Hallam University 1990

Bachelor of Education Australian Catholic University 2002

Diploma of Teaching. Ballarat College of Advanced Education (UB) 1981

Bachelor of Education. Ballarat College of Advanced Education (UB) 1981

Graduate Diploma in Education. Australian Catholic University 1994

Bachelor of Music University of Melbourne 2001

Bachelor of Teaching University of Melbourne 2001

Bachelor of Education – Postgraduate ACU 2001

Bachelor of Commerce, The University of Melbourne 1999

Bachelor of Arts, Victoria University of Wellington 1987

Professional development opportunities build upon the foundation established by basic teacher qualifications. At Ballarat Steiner School provision has been made for funding support and replacement teachers to enable staff to attend PD workshops and courses. The total expenditure for professional development provided by the school in 2010 was \$12,550.00. Staff were involved in activities such as Further Study, Steiner Teacher Training, Lectures, Seminars, ISV special briefings, Conferences, In-service/Curriculum Days, and Training (e.g. First Aid, timetable). Staff also fund their own training for example weekly Eurythmy classes.

Each week the staff participates in weekly professional development and artistic sessions at the school. Besides these formal PD structures, teachers also constantly network with each other informally and share experience and skills.

Learning and Literacy and Numeracy

The Steiner curriculum unfolds to meet the child's developmental stages with teaching matching the optimum time when the child is developmentally ready, in both intellect and inner life, to take the next step in learning. This approach is truly holistic. Our curriculum is carefully structured in the way it introduces and develops Literacy and Numeracy. In the early years experiences are grounded in reality, rich language experiences and visual imagery. Abstract concepts are avoided in these early stages.

Some form of formal evaluation of learning is necessary. At Ballarat Steiner School this is multi-faceted:

- Minimum Standards for each Class Level – we create student profiles from Class 1 through to Class 6. There are Class 1 - 6 benchmarks for the following content areas in Literacy and Numeracy:

Numeracy:

Our Number System (whole numbers)

Spatial Relationships

Measurement

Fractions – common/decimal

Basic Operations

Problem Solving

Equations

Mental Arithmetic

Working Mathematically

Literacy:

Writing – including Spelling and Grammar

Reading – including Comprehension Skills

Documents and Data

Spoken Language

Listening Skills

Research Skills

Becoming Literate – personal development

The checklists for each level details the developmental sequence within each domain so that achievement can be monitored via Class Assessment Tasks.

These records belong to the School and are updated by the Class Teacher each term, using a standard code that reflects the stages of:

1. Understanding
2. Consolidation
3. Independent mastery

- Observational notes written by teachers about each child.
- Ballarat Steiner School's standardised assessments for children in Classes 3 and 5 are in Literacy and Numeracy. These are given to children gradually from June to November in discreet and informal ways during our Practice Lesson times and appear to the children to be simply another revision exercise.

Ballarat Steiner School has, over the years, offered the AIM and now the NAPLAN tests, although parents, who in choosing this education do not want to place their children into formal testing situations in these early years.

Parents have a scheduled conversation time twice during each year, when teachers are available to share and comment on their child's work. Parents can also make appointments to discuss their child's development and progress at other times. Ballarat Steiner School encourages this close and effective liaison between parent and teacher.

Our end-of-year reports are meaningful and broad, providing a multi-layered profile of the child's achievements throughout the year.

School Well-Being

Ballarat Steiner School is a non-denominational school that reflects the values of Steiner Education. We endeavour to educate the children holistically via a balanced curriculum which recognises the totality of the child's threefold nature of thinking, feeling and willing, so that as adults they will be able to contribute to society as creative, ethical and responsible citizens.

At Ballarat Steiner School, we strive to build confidence, initiative and responsibility. We actively work towards an accepting and compassionate community which is founded on a harmonious partnership between school and home.

A vibrant and healthy school environment must be maintained by all members of the school community – teachers, children and parents. Our comprehensive code of conduct and our Communication Policies for both teachers and parents lay down clear guidelines for all parties, presenting direction for clear communication and effective procedures for the resolution of differences.

We have a maximum of 22 students per class, so that we can nourish each child and cater for individual differences.

The children are a constant source of delight. There is a high level of care evident in the student community as children from classes 1 – 6 play happily alongside each other. A child in additional need is discussed at staff meetings and a support group may be formed for him/her.

Student attendance is regular. Absenteeism is limited to the usual patterns of childhood illness, or to special circumstances which are discussed with parents.

The teachers' committed and generous participation in school life is a model for the students' behaviour, as they too have relatively few days of absence. Students' overall attendance rate for 2010 was 89.5%. Class 1 was 83.8%, Class 2 98.3%, Class 3 84.8%, Class 4 92.5%, Class 5 88.2% and Class 6 93%.

Our procedure for attendance monitoring states:

"It is not uncommon for students to be absent from school from time to time. This can often be attributed to illness or unforeseen circumstances such as an accident. In these cases most students return to school promptly and can explain the reason for their absence (Bonzos, 2005). These instances can be expected and are generally of little concern. However, where a student's absence is persistent, habitual and unexplained this is of grave concern to the school community (Bond, 2004).

Absenteeism (sometimes referred to as school refusal) applies to absences where a parent or carer allows or condones their child's late arrival or non-attendance at school. This is especially common for younger children of primary school age. This is as opposed to concealed truancy where the student attempts to conceal the absenteeism and the parents are often unaware of the child's absence (Bond, 2004). This is often more relevant to older students in high school. When absenteeism involves the parent or carers participation, understanding the motivations for such absences and negotiating appropriate responses by the school is very different to those instances of concealed truancy.

Obviously, attending school every day is crucially important for a student's education and social skills. Non-attending students are placed in disadvantage both socially and academically. They miss out on critical stages of interaction and development with their peers and at the same time minimise the likelihood of academic progress and success. This can compound issues of low self-esteem, social isolation and dissatisfaction that could well have triggered non-attendance in the first place (Bond, 2004).

Also, prolonged non-attendance can have deleterious effects for the child in later life. A recent Auditor General report stated, 'students who are absent from school are at the greatest risk of dropping out of school early, becoming long-term unemployed, being caught in the poverty trap, depending on welfare and being involved in the justice system' (Auditor General Victoria, 2004).

Absence from school and class clearly affects the absent student, but also impacts on the teacher's ability to plan and present class work in a sequential and organised way. This can affect the progress of all students in the class, not only those missing, and can complicate classroom management (DEET, 1999)."

Excerpt from the Department of Education Website.

Aim: This procedure sets out a process for ensuring that central monitoring and follow up of lateness and absences takes place, to ensure absenteeism can be kept to a minimum. The procedure will be communicated to the community via the notice board, newsletter and parent handbook.

Procedure:

1. Each morning the class teachers will mark the roll by 9.30 am.
2. Each afternoon the class teacher will mark the roll at 1.30pm
3. If the class is with a specialist teacher at these times it is the class teacher's responsibility to mark the roll before the specialist class begins.
4. As soon as the reason for any absences is known the class teacher will annotate the day of absence on the roll with the following codes: Sick(S) Family Holiday(H) Late(L) Medical Appointment(M) Other(O) Unexplained(U).
5. Each teacher will send a child down to the office, with a list, which shows the children who are not in attendance that morning, by 10.00am, or afternoon, by 2.00pm, and the code beside it.
6. The children absent will be recorded in the absence register by the office staff by 10.30am each morning and 2.30pm each afternoon.
7. If the child arrives after 9.30am or leaves before 3.30pm the child must be signed in or out at the office by the parent/guardian or carer.
8. If the child is absent without the office having received notification of the absence and its reason from the family, the office administration team will telephone, email or SMS the parent/guardian to check on the reason for the absence.
9. In cases where the parent/guardian cannot be contacted via home phone, email, mobile or sms, further action will be taken by contacting the child's emergency contacts to ascertain the child's safety.
10. Should the absence without notification or explanation continue for more than one day, the Education Facilitator or Office Administration will repeat the steps in 6 and 7 above.
11. Further follow up may be taken and may include, but is not limited to, a member of the Management Team or the child's teacher, attending the child's home or writing to the parent/guardian/carer at the child's home address.
12. Where the Facilitator or another staff member is concerned about the safety of the child and holds a reasonable belief that a child is at risk of physical or sexual abuse, a notification will be made to DHS Child Protection (1800 075 599), as soon as such a belief is held.
13. Where the Facilitator or another staff member is concerned about the general safety or wellbeing of the child, a referral will be made to ChildFirst (1300 551 948) or the local police station, as appropriate.
14. In relation to 10 and 11 above, further action will be in line with advice received from the nominated authorities and/or contact with the local police station.
15. Where a child returns to school after a period of absence without an explanation having been provided by the child's parent/guardian/carer, the Facilitator or the child's teacher will request an explanation. The explanation will be noted on the child's file. A refusal to provide an explanation will also be noted.
16. At the end of each term, children with repeated absenteeism will be sent a letter home outlining the child's late arrival and / or absenteeism.

Community

Our parent body is supportive in many ways. We recognise that each day there are many parental contributions which enrich the lives of our students, for example, practical assistance with reading or a project, or the sharing of knowledge or skills. A community is a living and growing organism that requires ongoing sustenance.

Parent Information Sessions and Class Meetings address the children's development and foster dialogue about education and the challenges of parenting.

The celebration of seasonal festivals offers another opportunity for community sharing. The schools as a whole, gathers together each Monday morning to begin the week to sing and to share. Parents are always encouraged to attend.

History

Ballarat Steiner Kindergarten was founded in 1990 following the commencement of a playgroup a few years earlier, on the initiative of a group of parents and teachers who held sight of a long-term vision to create a Rudolf Steiner educational establishment for the community of Ballarat and district. The Ballarat Steiner Primary School was founded in 2000 and is situated on a picturesque 10 acre site in Mt. Helen, near Buninyong.

Landmarks in 2010

The year began with a three day teacher and community workshop when we came together for nourishment and new beginnings with John Allison facilitating the workshop.

Our Professional Development included two of our teachers attending a weekly course at the Rudolf Steiner Seminar in Warranwood, three teachers attending the Kolisko Steiner Seminar in New Zealand and numerous workshops in literacy, numeracy and well-being undertaken by individual teaching staff. The Committee Chair and the Business Manager also attended the Steiner Education Australian Governance, Leadership and management Seminar in Sydney.

Parent Education during 2010 included evening talks, workshops and class meetings.

The children from classes 1-6 contributed over \$500 to their Friendship School in East Timor from soup and toasty fundraising days.

The festivals are a highlight of each year. At Easter the whole school gathers for verses, story or a play before participating in a shared lunch. At midwinter, a whole school spiral is walked in the darkness accompanied by singing and recorder-playing before lanterns are lit and the community walks around the school. Spring is a festival of flowers and joyful sharing with Christmas culminating in a whole school play "The Shepherds' Play".

Work was completed on our National Pride Project – a new kitchen for the community. And building began for our two-storey classroom building, library and music room with the assistance of the federal government Building the Education Revolution grant and the State Needs Based Capital Funding. That the Federal government made the commitment to Build Schools at a time

of great financial uncertainty was a brave and bold decision that has helped us greatly not just now but has also helped us to position ourselves well for future stability and growth. For this we thank the federal Government for its vision and its allocation of resources to our school.

Our status as an independent school meant that we could discuss, plan, design and build something that was of our own choosing and making and that reflects our communities' hopes and ideals. This would not have been possible without the contribution made by the ISV.

As advocates of our school, the independent Schools of Australia has been an invaluable partner and ongoing supporter and we are grateful to them for ensuring that we have a voice on the bigger stage.

Post school destinations

As our school is only nine years old, we have not yet been able to collate statistical evidence of post year 12 activities of school leavers from our school.

Transition to local secondary schools has been very successful, with most students attending local independent schools. This year's cohort are performing excellently at various schools in Ballarat with one of our seven students receiving a scholarship at Ballarat and Clarendon College.

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

The school will undertake the annual parent satisfaction survey in early September as a means of receiving feedback and planning school improvements for 2010. The 2008 parent satisfaction report indicated overall excellent levels of satisfaction with the school and some outstanding ideas for the school to examine for improvement. In particular this has meant the undertaking of the Governance review as described earlier. Annual Teacher reviews indicate that staff are satisfied with the match of duties and responsibilities and working conditions. Parents are regularly reminded of the School Communication Policy and are invited to provide input and ideas on any aspect of the school operations on a regular basis.

These are some aspects of the deep and rich life of Ballarat Steiner School – the way we live our vision to further the growth and nourishment of our entire community.

Committee of Management of Ballarat Steiner School, June 2011.

Staff of Ballarat Steiner School and Kindergarten

Teaching Staff – 2010

- Ambika Bone - Teacher Kindergarten & Ring-a-Rosie
- Lisa Hylan - Teacher Prep
- Anna Kotanidis - Teacher Class 1 and 2
- Gareth Jones - Teacher Class 3 and 4
- Vincent Heley - Teacher Class 5 and 6
- Sarah Hirst - Release Teacher
- Rhonda Humphries - Education Facilitator

Assistants and Specialist Teachers

- Janine Thompson Stokell - Prep Assistant
- Sarah Cottingham - Playgroup Coordinator
- Anna Placidi - Playgroup Leader
- Magda Carpenter - Classroom Assistant (Class 1 - 6)
- Amy Fleet - Ring-a-Rosie Assistant
- Janine Pigdon - Kindergarten Assistant
- Marion Reed - Eurythmy
- Rhonda Humphries - Support Education
- Gottard Killian and Kate Hill Music - Cello
- Gottard Killian and Kate Hill Music – Violin
- Kristine Klindenberg - Resigned - Language German
- Jean Laing - Senior Craft
- Johanna Koelle - Junior Craft

Administrative Staff – 2010

- Louise Cheslett - Business Manager
- Denise Williams – Admissions / Administration
- Anna Placidi - Administration
- Nicole Afford - Administration / Book keeper
- Mujinzo Golombiewski – Maintenance and Cleaner