2008 Annual Report to the School Community
SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Jells Park Primary School is situated in the south-eastern residential area of Wheelers Hill, within five minutes walking distance of the Jells Park Reserve, from which the school derives its name. Built in 1979, the school has immediate impact because of the unique contemporary design of the building which is complemented by the attractive treed setting and well maintained school grounds. In recent years the school has constructed a performing arts building, new classrooms, shade sails over all play equipment and is currently implementing plans to resurface the school oval with synthetic grass.

The student enrolment of 410 for 2008 is consistent with a trend of gradual growth over the last 5 years. This is partly due to a considerable number of families from outside the immediate area seeking enrolment at Jells Park Primary School and the wide range of activities the school provides for its students. The teaching staff of 31 is supported by 2 administration staff and 6 aides working in a variety of capacities.

Jells Park Primary School is extremely fortunate to be strongly supported by community members. Support is displayed in a range of ways including assistance in a wide range of school activities including classroom support, after school activities, committees, excursions, camps and grounds maintenance. The score for General Satisfaction in the Parent Survey has increased each year since 2006. General Satisfaction for 2008 was 5.73 on a 7 point scale which is above the state mean. This is an increase of 0.2 from 2007, a very pleasing improvement considering the state primary mean has decreased by 0.51 in the same period.

The Jells Park Primary School mission is:

To nurture and develop individuals to become adaptable in a changing environment and to acquire a lifelong love of learning and the skills and attitude necessary to function successfully in a global society.

To support this, the school community believes the following values play a vital role in establishing an environment that enables all children to achieve their full potential

Respect:
- Treating others with empathy, compassion and dignity
- Valuing yourself and the environment

Honesty
- Behaving in a trustworthy manner
- Demonstrating integrity and fairness

Excellence
- Taking pride in the efforts and achievements of ourselves and others
- Accepting the challenge to realise our full potential

Resilience
- Maintaining a positive attitude
- Demonstrating persistence and flexibility

During 2008 the Annual Implementation Plan included major focuses to:

- extend strategies to cater for students who are achieving above expected VELS levels.
- imbed the three V.E.L.S. strands of Physical and Personal Learning, Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary within planning frameworks.
- extend current Assessment and Reporting practices, particularly in Reading and Writing.
- introduce aspects of student self assessment and goal setting.
- develop an Action Plan on effective teaching and learning and the successful integration of ICT within VELS domains.
- utilise coaching and mentoring to improve teaching practice.
Jells Park staff implemented a professional development plan which allocated significant time and resources to the improvement of assessment in Literacy and Numeracy and moderation in Writing. Improved ICT skills were also a focus through weekly ICT professional development.

**Teacher Satisfaction**
The average score for teacher satisfaction (School Morale) at Jells Park Primary School was 88.5 on a scale from 0 to 100 where 100 is the best possible score. This is significantly higher than the State Primary mean of 80.8.

**Teacher Absence**
At the time of printing this report no official data regarding staff absences for 2008 had been provided by DEECD but staff absence at Jells Park Primary School remains at a low level.

**Teacher Retention**
Of the 31 teaching staff at June 2007, 28 or 90% were still at Jells Park Primary School in June 2008. Of the staff that did not return 2 moved to other schools and 1 elected to choose a different career path.

**Teacher participation in professional learning**
All teaching staff have participated in professional learning throughout the year. This has included regular fortnightly professional development based at school, Induction/Mentoring for Beginning Teachers and individual professional development relevant to teachers’ needs.

**Teacher Qualifications**
All teachers in Victorian Government schools are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. The requirements of Teaching can be found at: http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?DocumentID=241

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Principal’s Report

Our school focus during 2008 was to improve student engagement through the regular implementation of ICT in all curriculum areas. The installation of electronic whiteboards into all classrooms provided regular access to the latest technology for all students. Staff received professional development in ICT to explore interesting and innovative uses for the new technology.

Student achievement continues to be at a high level throughout the school but teachers constantly reflect on their teaching practices, curriculum delivery and content to maximise the learning of all our students which is reflected in the high Student Achievement results at each level.

The purchase of two new classrooms for the Level 2 students supports our pedagogy by facilitating team planning and effective cross grouping, as well as allowing us to maintain small class sizes of straight grades.

During 2008 the school continued to provide a wide range of extra curricula activities including:

Creative Music program       Epilepsy Trivia Challenge
School Choir                  Wakakirri
School Percussion Group/Band  Camps
Kelly Sports Program          Academic Competitions
Keys to success/You Can Do It EMR Choir
Chess Club                    RACV Energy Challenge
Tournament of Minds           Soccer Club

The safety and wellbeing of our students remains a priority at Jells Park. Much attention is paid to maintaining a safe environment both inside and outside the classroom and it is important to note the high number of staff who hold current Level 2 first aid qualifications. Thanks to the students, staff and parents who report issues of concern so that they can be addressed in a prompt manner.

Jells Park is proud of its positive school environment where individuals are valued, and respect and tolerance for others are continually demonstrated and expected. This year we continued our commitment to the ‘You Can Do It’ program which focuses on the five keys of Resilience, Organisation, Persistence, Cooperation and Getting Along. This program also supports our Values Program. These programs are integrated into our entire curriculum and underpin all activities and interactions within the school.

Jells Park is exceptionally lucky to have such a supportive parent community and 2008 was no exception. The parents willingly assist in classrooms and support the myriad of school activities, programs and functions. On behalf of the staff, I wish to thank all our families for their support throughout the year.

The Friends of Jells Park had a very successful year organising exciting activities for our students including the Disco, school cookbook, stalls for Mothers’ and Fathers’ Days, supporting staff and classroom programs and organising activities and events for the parent community. They contributed their budgeted $8,000 which provided more reading recourses, including the very popular Comprehension Boxes and some new sporting equipment. I would like to thank Melissa Gallina and her team of dedicated parents for all their hard work and support.

The school financial and administrative processes continue to be managed in a most efficient and professional manner by Helen Farmilo and Sandy Sloane. The school office is pivotal to effective organisation and communication within the school and I sincerely thank Helen and Sandy for their friendly approach to all tasks and for their constant support and dedication.

I would like to thank Justin Butler who took on the role of Assistant Principal in terms 3 and 4 whilst Bruce assisted as Principal at a local school and Anne Davies who took on the role of leading teacher. Both did an excellent job and provided a great deal of support to myself and the staff. I would also like to thank Bruce Cunningham, Justin Butler and the Leadership team for their ideas, their guidance and for their support and the whole staff for their dedication and commitment to providing the best possible learning environment and opportunities for our students.

The effective operation of the School Council provides a clear direction for decision making and the allocation of resources within the school. I would like to thank John Leslie, President, Garry Rogers, Treasurer and all the councillors for their work during 2008.

2008 was a very successful year and I am confident that the school will continue to build on the strengths of the past and develop improved student outcomes and opportunities for the future.
Gillian Brookes – Principal

STUDENT PROGRESS and ACHIEVEMENT

Student Learning
The Victorian Essential Learning Standards forms the basis of the school’s curriculum. Units of Work across all levels ensure that all aspects of VELS are fully implemented. Jells Park Primary School met DEECD requirements by reporting to parents in all domains as required in 2008.

The current Strategic Plan goals of:
- further developing student learning outcomes and teaching practices to enhance academic rigour and to encourage deep thinking in all students.
- providing a safe and stimulating learning environment that excites students to challenge and extend their thinking, social competencies, resilience and self esteem.
- extending our current transition practices to facilitate effective transition for all students from preschool to Year 7.

were supported in 2008 through:
- extending strategies to cater for students who are achieving above expected VELS levels.
- imbedding the three V.E.L.S. strands of Physical and Personal Learning, Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary within planning frameworks.
- extending current Assessment and Reporting practices.
- introducing aspects of student self assessment and goal setting.
- developing an Action Plan on effective teaching and learning and the successful integration of ICT within the ultranet framework.
- using coaching and mentoring to improve teaching practice.
- regularly using P.M.I.’s, Prep to Year 6 to monitor and further develop positive student/teacher relationships.
- providing staff professional development focussed on student needs and perspectives.

The 2008 school year commenced with staff working closely with educational consultant, Karen Green on strategies to raise all student expectations through a differentiated curriculum. The positive impact of this professional development is evident in the increased percentage of children, Prep to Year 6, receiving A’s or B’s in Reading, Speaking and Listening, Number and Measurement, Chance and Data. Through regular reflection and modification of existing Units of Work staff planned and implemented extension activities and Personal Education Plans to cater for highly able students. To support the school’s focus of raising expectations, the aspect of self and peer assessment was introduced to students. Students were involved in the preparation of assessment procedures and given guidelines on setting individual goals and monitoring their progress towards achieving these.

In 2008 the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) was introduced for Year 3 and 5 children nationwide. This replaces the previous statewide assessment program Achievement Improvement Monitor. Jells Park Primary School students performed very well with results being above state means in Reading, Writing and Numeracy excluding Year 3 Writing results which were only minimally below state mean. In Year 3 100% of students are achieving at or above state benchmarks in Reading, Spelling and Numeracy. 100% of Year 5 students are achieving at or above state benchmarks in Reading, Spelling, Numeracy and Grammar and Punctuation. As the NAPLAN was in its first year in 2008 a comparison to previous years’ results is not possible.
Student Engagement and Wellbeing

In 2008 the Education Committee formed and updated a number of policies to support student wellbeing. Some of the policies included:

- Anaphylaxis Management Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Asthma Policy
- Syringe Policy
- Action Plan for Medical Emergency
- Management of Critical Incidents

School procedures were reviewed during the year to ensure that appropriate processes were in place to support the health and wellbeing of all children and that Jells Park Primary School met, or exceeded, DEECD guidelines in the above areas. The school management team analysed the Staff, Parent and Student surveys to ensure the needs of each body are being considered in planning the future directions of the school.

Providing the children an engaging curriculum has been a major focus in recent years. Staff professional development was conducted throughout the year to support a more engaging environment for children. A wide range of activities were conducted within the classroom and as extra curricula activities to support student engagement. Some of the classroom activities included Science rotations, extension groups, children being given the opportunity to select areas of study and increased use of ICT. Extra curricula activities included EMR Choir, music performances, RACV Challenge, trivia quests and Tournament of Minds. Children were also provided opportunities to give feedback to staff in a range of forms regarding the activities offered.

The tables below clearly indicate that student engagement is constantly improving. Student absences at Jells Park have dropped to an average of 10.3 days per student in 2008 which is well below the state average of 13.4 days per student per year. Student absences continue to be monitored closely. Approximately 50% of the students who had a significant number of absences in 2008 were due to extended family holidays overseas or interstate. Taking this information into consideration student absences due to illness would be considerably lower than the 10.3 days per child indicated.

Each year children in Years 5 and 6 complete an Attitude to School survey. In 2008 Student Connectedness was 4.54 on a five point scale where 5 is the highest possible score. This has increased by 0.41 since 2006. The improvement in connectedness to school and reduction in the number of absences per student are testament to the school’s efforts to improve student engagement and wellbeing at Jells Park Primary School.

Student Pathways and Transitions

During 2008 staff has been involved in whole school and individual professional development and regular moderation sessions to improve consistency of teacher judgements across VELS levels. Assessment guidelines were developed for Literacy and Numeracy. The guidelines indicated the skills required to achieve at each VELS level. These documents supported staff when assessing individual student progress enabling teachers to be more consistent with their judgements. Staff found these documents to be of great value and felt more confident in making accurate assessments of student development against progression points.
The Pre School/Prep Transition program was extended in 2008. To enhance transition for prospective children, and to develop stronger links with the local preschool, Year 5 children visited the Jells Park Pre School during Term 3. With the first contact with their buddies being in their own familiar environment the pre schoolers were less hesitant when the formal transition program commenced at the school during Term 4. Due to the success of this it is planned to increase the contact between Year 5 children and the pre school in 2009. Feedback clearly indicates that parents are extremely satisfied with the transition program offered from pre school to primary school. This is supported by the settled start to the school year of our 2009 Prep children.

Year 6 children interacted with local secondary schools and students during the year. Visits from secondary schools enabled our children to learn more about secondary school life. A student’s perspective was given from past Jells Park Primary School children. A full day’s transition program was offered during Term 4 where children attended their school of choice for 2009. This day receives positive feedback from those who attend.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

2008 was the second year of the current Strategic Plan. As previously mentioned the goals of the Strategic Plan are:

- To further develop student learning outcomes and teaching practices to enhance academic rigour and to encourage deep thinking in all students.
- To provide a safe and stimulating learning environment that excites students to challenge and extend their thinking, social competencies, resilience and self esteem.
- To extend our current transition practices to facilitate effective transition for all students from preschool to Year 7.

Excellent progress is being made in achieving the goals to be attained by the end of 2010, with many targets already met or exceeded.

During 2009 the staff will focus on the following aspects:

- Extending strategies to cater for students who are below the expected level.
- Utilising Digital Portfolios in Level 4 to extend current assessment practices.
- Students taking more responsibility for their own learning through improved assessment practices.
- Reviewing the use of ICT to support Student Learning and Engagement.
- Using coaching and mentoring and observation sessions to improve teaching practice.
- Staff developing increased levels of empathy and placing a greater emphasis on student connectedness.
- Facilitating effective transition for students coming into the school and leaving the school.
- Facilitating effective transition for all students from Prep to Year 6.

In 2006 the school was accredited as a school with a Performance and Development Culture. Jells Park is well above the threshold and at, or above, the state median in all measurable elements. The school will continue to implement strategies to ensure that the culture within the school reflects that this is a school with a strong commitment to encouraging all students to strive for excellence in a supportive environment, which recognises individual differences and different rates of learning. The importance of the partnership between students, staff and parents will continue to be recognised and the high level of parent involvement in the learning programs and in extra curricular activities acknowledged.

Professional Development will focus on ensuring the staff keeps abreast of current best practices to enable the teachers to be at the forefront of educational programs offered to the students to develop and improve their learning.

FINANCIAL POSITION AND PERFORMANCE

The 2008 financial year proved to be a very successful year for Jells Park Primary School. The Jells Park Primary School Finance Sub Committee met regularly to monitor and manage the financial performance of the school. Resources were appropriately allocated to support school programs. Thorough planning and sound management enabled a high level of staffing and School Support Officers to enhance student learning and school programs.
During 2008 Jells Park was successful in applying for a grant of $50,000 through the National Schools Solar Program funded by the Federal Government. This will fund further water tanks, solar panels and improve the efficiency of lighting to reduce carbon emissions and reduce school funds expended on energy usage.

The strength of community support played a significant role in the school’s financial position. This strength comes from in excess of 95% of families contributing to school levies and the strong support of fundraising activities. The Friends of Jells Park Primary School worked diligently on a volunteer basis to raise funds to support school programs and facilities. They had a successful year raising $8,000 for the school. The funds received from the Computer, Library and Building levies also support the continual improvement in our school facilities for the benefit of our children. This support has provided the opportunity to purchase resources to complement the school’s ICT programs and assist in the maintenance and upgrading of the school’s grounds and buildings.

Some of the financial highlights for 2008 included:
- addition of a second new building at the northern end of the school to enable all Level 2 classes to be located in the same block
- installation of 4 electronic whiteboards
- upgrade of the Library including carpet, painting and construction of a reading pit
- painting of the junior toilets
- funding the laying of synthetic grass on the school oval
- replacement of a retaining wall
- funding the program Mathletics across the school
- significant investment in the professional development of staff

The sound management and administration of the school finances is significantly due to the outstanding procedures of Sandy Sloane and Helen Farmilo, the Business Manager together with the Finance Committee.
• School Contact Information

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• This report contains summary data extracted from the School Level Report. If you would like to access the School Level Report, please contact (insert school contact details).