Pennant Hills High School
Annual School Report

2012

NSW Government
Education & Communities
Public Schools NSW

8438
Messages

Principal’s Message

Pennant Hills High School is recognised as an excellent comprehensive, coeducational public secondary school that achieves considerable success in a very broad range of endeavours. We continue to celebrate the fact that our school provides a holistic and inclusive education for almost 1100 students. As a local community high school, we achieve extraordinary outcomes from a broad range of programs and activities. We foster and develop a learning environment which is happy, safe, encouraging, stimulating and rich, in which all students are given every opportunity to reach their potential and to achieve their personal best.

Our students receive outstanding support and encouragement from our highly experienced and dedicated school staff, and from their families and the wider community. The strong sense of community which is evident at our school is a hallmark of our organisation, and is an area upon which we focus a great deal of effort. This enables students to be supported by others and to feel happy and safe in a harmonious environment.

One of the most commendable aspects of this school in 2012 was the continuing commitment from our young people to work cooperatively; to be conscious of the needs of fellow students when they are faced with adversity, and to support them in appropriate ways. Members of our school community take great pride in being part of Pennant Hills High School, and the clear and palpable emphasis on student wellbeing is recognised and applauded.

Our cohesive school community, characterised by high degrees of equity, humanity, cooperation, harmony, support and achievement, is a result of the efforts of many people. We should celebrate the great talent, dedication, diversity, creativity, citizenship and general excellence of our students.

I acknowledge and thank students, staff and parents for their wonderful contributions to our school in 2012.

It is with pleasure that I present the Annual School Report for the 2012 academic year. I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school’s achievements and areas for development.

Geoff Wing
P & C Message

The Pennant Hills High School Parents and Citizens Association (P&C) is a vibrant and diverse group of parents, carers and teaching staff whose aim is to enhance the learning of students by providing funding, through voluntary contributions, fund-raising and canteen contributions, for resources not otherwise available.

All faculties are encouraged to apply for funding and in 2012 the P&C was pleased to be able to meet all faculty requests. The P&C also provided additional funding to the school for the new hospitality kitchen and Learning Hub. In total, the P&C was able to support the school with $120 000 in 2012. The P&C also provides funding for students who are selected to represent in sport and curriculum enrichment activities at a national level. All students who attain this level of selection are encouraged to apply for funding.

The P&C provides a monthly forum for open, lively discussion with regard to all educational matters affecting not only Pennant Hills High School but education in general. Members of staff and community specialty groups are also invited to make relevant presentations to the meetings.

In 2012, there were a number of maintenance areas identified within the school which required urgent attention. The P&C, along with staff, students, parents and the wider community came together for the inaugural ‘Great Penno Reno’. Over one weekend, almost 400 people worked tirelessly, painting classrooms, cleaning and refreshing the canteen area, weeding and planting gardens, cleaning and rejuvenating toilet blocks and generally sprucing up the school. The ‘Penno Reno’ will now become an annual event, incorporating systematic planning of maintenance requirements. The organising committee consisted of parents and school staff who, with their combined talents, organised donations and sponsorship for the weekend event. The P&C donated $6000 to this program. This event brought the community together and not only achieved the expected outcome but highlighted the great relationship the school has with the community.

Pennant Hills High School enjoys a strong relationship with the local community, which the P&C encourages by promoting the school whenever possible.

Fearnie Fisher, P&C President

Student Representative’s Message

The Student Representative Council (SRC) had a very positive and successful year for student advocacy and governance. The year began with an independently planned and funded leadership day, which students evaluated as beneficial and motivating.

The landscaping project in the main quadrangle was completed, thanks to support and labour from various SRC members under the supervision and leadership of Head Teacher Roger Niccol. Consisting of carefully constructed and well-designed garden beds and artificial grass, the area has become very popular.

Holding our very own SRC ‘knit in’ to support the Wrap with Love Foundation, we were able to successfully donate many blankets to this worthy cause. The SRC could not have done this without the many students, teachers and families who knitted, crocheted and sewed.

Spirit Week was a very popular event, and remained a focal point of the SRC calendar. The SRC planned events designed to generate school spirit and teamwork, where students were able to enjoy a variety of games, food, and entertainment throughout the week, culminating in Carnival Day.

The SRC is also proud to continue to provide financial support to students selected to represent the school in sporting events and other curriculum enrichment opportunities.

Jessica Beard, SRC Secretary
School Context

Student Information

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

Student Enrolment Profile

Management of Non-attendance

Pennant Hills High School is active in the management of student non-attendance. Class rolls are marked online every lesson, and the system identifies attendance conflicts instantly, enabling swift corrective action from executive staff. Students are required to make up time and work missed through any occasion of truancy. Executive staff and the home school liaison officer meet regularly to identify potential issues, to discuss students who have established a frequent pattern of non-attendance, and to develop plans for students whose attendance is of concern. The support and involvement of parents and caregivers is routinely enlisted and is crucial to the success of our ability to ensure that non-attendance is minimised.

Post-school Destinations

Year 12 students selected a variety of post-school pathways depending on their results and vocational interests. Seventy-two per cent of the cohort (122) received university offers. A further 32 students (19%) enrolled in TAFE courses, five enrolled in private colleges, two joined the armed forces and the remaining eight students proceeded directly into employment.

Year 12 Students Undertaking Vocational or Trade Training

Sixteen Year 12 students (10% of cohort) undertook a TAFE-delivered vocational education and training (TVET) course, with two students completing school-based apprenticeships and traineeships (SBAT) qualifications. The two SBAT students completed their training in hairdressing and automotive, with the automotive student placing first in NSW in the HSC examination. Both SBAT students have progressed into the second year of their apprenticeships.

Year 12 Students Attaining HSC or Equivalent Vocational Educational Qualification

All 169 mainstream students and seven students from the Special Education Unit achieved the HSC credential. Outside of the main cohort, two mainstream students followed a pathways pattern of study, accumulating their HSC over more than two years. Six students were accelerated in one subject.
Staff Information

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

Staff Establishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>60.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Moderate Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Support Teacher</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Adviser</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>101.3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The National Education Agreement requires schools to report on the Indigenous composition of their workforce.

Two members of the school’s permanent staff have identified as having Indigenous heritage.

Staff Retention

The staff at Pennant Hills High School comprises a wealth of experienced and long-serving teachers and school administrative and support staff (SASS), complemented by several new scheme teachers. During 2012 five teachers retired from the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) and two teachers accepted transfers to other schools within DEC. Five new teachers were permanently appointed to Pennant Hills High School.

Teacher Qualifications

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
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Financial Summary

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary</th>
<th>30/11/2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>363161.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>625342.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>246748.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School and community sources</td>
<td>873945.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>21396.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>124837.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>2255431.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Expenditure**

- Teaching and learning
  - Key learning areas | 261965.05
  - Excursions         | 172674.33
  - Extracurricular dissections | 179797.65
- Library             | 8463.13
- Training and development | 51225.69
- Tied funds          | 232328.11
- Casual relief teachers | 197863.67
- Administration and office | 444606.56
- School-operated canteen | 0.00
- Utilities           | 155965.27
- Maintenance         | 113561.70
- Trust accounts      | 171459.56
- Capital programs    | 0.00
- Total expenditure   | 1989910.72

**Balance carried forward** | 265520.87

A full copy of the school's 2012 financial statement is provided to the Pennant Hills High School P&C Association. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.
**Significant Programs and Initiatives**

**Positive Behaviour Engaging Learners**  
Positive Behaviour Engaging Learners (PBEL) is a school-wide initiative which began in 2012 to build on our school’s many successful practices. PBEL assists teachers in creating an engaging learning environment where students make positive behaviour choices that promote and support academic success.

Twelve teachers, including the senior executive, were trained by Northern Sydney Region facilitators who continue to coach the team through the process of planning for sustainable implementation of this initiative. The work to date has included refining the school purpose to determine core values of responsibility, integrity and achievement (RIA). PBEL emphasises explicit teaching of these core values and expectations. Teachers designed lessons based on these expectations, which were a focus across the school in Term 4.

Frequent rewards reinforce positive behaviours in outdoor settings. RIA cards have formed the base of the rewards system, complementing the existing merit structure. These have been very popular with students, especially with the chance to win prizes in a weekly assembly draw.

The next steps in the implementation process will include a review of the consequences system to ensure consistent follow-up of unacceptable behaviour, a focus on teaching expectations and promoting restorative practices. Data will be collected by Northern Sydney Region facilitators to identify areas for future action.

**Year 10 ‘At the Crossroads: My Life, My Future’ Conference**  
Year 10 students participated in a five day conference, specifically developed to address some of the personal and social issues facing young people in schools today, and to prepare them for the transition into Year 11 and the challenges that lie ahead. The program focused on academic achievement, interpersonal relationships, personal career planning and protective and preventative behaviours.

The first three days, spent at Vision Valley, included presentations from Brent Sanders, a former police officer who spoke about protective behaviours and life skills; Norm Spalding, a paramedic who highlighted the dangers of driving and drinking or speeding; and Matt Darvas, a former Pennant Hills High School student, who gave a presentation on life choices.

The remaining two days involved a series of workshops on successful essay writing, effective note taking and study techniques, research and referencing skills, developing a portfolio for practical courses, public speaking, presentation skills and digital literacy, motivation and goal setting, cyber safety, CV and interview skills, and career and study pathways.

Data from student evaluations indicated that the program helped to reduce anxiety, increase confidence, raise awareness and expectations for success in Stage 6 assessment tasks and equip students with effective study techniques. The majority of students requested follow-up sessions on exam preparation and stress management in 2013.

**Aboriginal Education**

Pennant Hills High School supports the development and implementation of programs and strategies which improve the learning opportunities for Aboriginal students, and educate all students about Aboriginal Australia. The school has an Aboriginal education co-ordinator.

Aboriginal education is a mandatory component of all key learning areas (KLA) and has been successfully embedded in all faculty programs. In particular, the study of Indigenous culture is an important aspect of the English, Human Society and its Environment (HSIE) and Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) KLAS. The Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) faculty has now incorporated units of work on the history of Aboriginal sport and leading Aboriginal sportspersons into their Stage 4 physical activity and sports studies (PASS) elective. Musical and dance performances, film, art, drama and Indigenous guest speakers from the Sydney Swans, all facilitated understanding of Aboriginal perspectives across all stages.

The school is a member of the Dare to Lead Coalition which provides valuable resources to support students and teachers in the implementation of the Aboriginal Education Policy.
All staff engaged with ongoing professional training to develop an increased understanding of Aboriginal cultural education, and this is incorporated into faculty programs which will facilitate further understanding and appreciation of the Aboriginal perspective for all students.

Through the delivery of all of these programs, Pennant Hills High School continued to promote Aboriginal cultural perspectives and ensured that all students learnt about, and valued, Aboriginal culture.

**Multicultural Education**

Our school aims to provide all students with an understanding and appreciation of the multicultural nature of our society and the contributions made to it by people from different cultural backgrounds. Opportunities existed for students to acquire the knowledge, skills and positive attitudes required for life in a culturally diverse society through the integration of multicultural perspectives in both whole school and faculty programs.

Over the year, our school was privileged to host students from European and Scandinavian countries as exchange students. These students provided an insight into cultural and educational programs in their own countries whilst learning much from our students and our school system.

Students participated in the Australian Government’s Harmony Day program. The focus of this day was to raise awareness and understanding of the difficulties faced by students from around the world. We also took part in the Regional SRC Harmony Day celebrations, where students participated in activities to highlight the challenges and opportunities relating to integration.

The support of the school’s English as a second language (ESL) teacher provided targeted assistance to students from language backgrounds other than English and was important in helping them to reach their academic potential. Students in Stage 4 gained awareness of other cultures, their food, dress, language, sports and traditions, through immersion in programs developed by the Languages other than English (LOTE) faculty. As a result of programs run in conjunction with our partner primary schools we introduced the study of Mandarin into our Year 7 curriculum.

The anti-racism contact officer (ARCO) continued to play a significant role in assisting students to understand the differences in cultural beliefs that people may have and how best we can all contribute to understanding and accepting these differences.

**The Learning Centre, Learning 2 Learn and the Homework Club**

The Learning Centre was established at the beginning of 2012 with the primary focus of re-engaging some students with their learning through one-on-one or small group support. Individual learning plans were developed to improve literacy and numeracy levels. These plans included support or mentoring for students’ additional educational, emotional, welfare and behavioural needs. Where appropriate, students were connected to other services outside the school. The learning and support team developed a referral procedure for students to access this additional support.

The ‘Learning 2 Learn’ thinking skills program operated for the first time in 2012 for all Year 7 students. The aims of this program were to create a smoother transition to high school, effective independent learners, student empowerment, awareness of important rules, responsible digital citizens and strong student–teacher relationships.

The Homework Club met in the Learning Centre on two afternoons per week, supported by Pennant Hills High School teachers and practicum students, to assist with homework, study and assignments.

**Tournament of the Minds**

Tournament of the Minds is a problem-solving program for teams of students from both primary and secondary years. They are required to solve demanding, open-ended challenges from one of the following disciplines—applied technology, language and literature, mathematics, engineering and social sciences—and to present their solutions in a creative manner within a structured presentation. Students also complete a spontaneous creative thinking challenge.

In 2012 the school entered a team into the program for the first time. Selecting the social sciences discipline, our Year 7 and 8 team achieved a very commendable honours result, competing against other schools in the region.
Collaborative Learning

A new learning space was created within an existing Level 3 main quadrangle building to facilitate project learning. Three traditional classrooms were renovated to create the Learning Hub, designed to enable up to 70 students to work collaboratively with their peers and teachers on complex tasks.

The Learning Hub contains areas for individual, small group and whole group work, and features modern, flexible furniture and access to the garden quadrangle for breakout activities. This work has been jointly financed by the P&C Association, Leadership in the Middle School (LIMS) students and school funds.

National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program

The Australian Government committed funding of $62.15 million over four years (2008–09 to 2011–12) for the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP). The aim of the program was to increase opportunities for school students to become familiar with the languages and cultures of Australia’s key regional neighbours, namely China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea.

In response to the NALSSP, Pennant Hills High School participated in a pilot program in 2011 and 2012. Each Year 7 class participated in the 13 week program where they were exposed to the Mandarin language and culture via the school’s connected classroom.

Young Endeavour

The Rotary Club of Pennant Hills again generously provided an opportunity for one of our students to sail on the Young Endeavour as part of its program to promote the development of self-confidence, cooperative teamwork and leadership skills in today’s youth.

Callum Moses was the deserving recipient. The Royal Australian Navy crew teach young people how to sail a square-rigged vessel, including how to navigate, keep watch, take the helm, cook in the galley, tie knots, work aloft and ultimately take command. Participants develop teamwork, leadership and communication skills, work with disadvantaged youth and meet people from around Australia.

The Rotary Club of Pennant Hills provided additional sponsorship for the runners-up to have a day sail on the James Craig.

Student Environment Group

The Student Environment Group represented the school in the Youth Eco Summit held at Olympic Park, gaining an insight into emerging environmental issues and how to create awareness at school. With the support of Hornsby Shire Council representatives, the students conducted a waste audit in Term 4, the results of which will provide an ongoing focus for the group.
Lions Youth of the Year Quest

The Lions Youth of the Year Quest seeks to encourage young people with high level academic, leadership, sporting, public speaking and citizenship skills to develop an interest in leadership and to become role models for youth in Australia.

Two Year 11 students, Bronte Schuftan and Callum Moses, participated in the West Pennant Hills—Cherrybrook Lions Youth of the Year Quest. Competing against students from comprehensive and selective local schools, Bronte won the Public Speaking Award and Callum won the overall club Youth of the Year award. West Pennant Hills—Cherrybrook Lions Club 2011 Youth of the Year winner, Madeleine Wensley, represented our school at the District Finals in 2012 and was runner-up with her speech on human trafficking.

Northern Sydney Region Awards and Recognition

Four members of our staff and two students were honoured to receive awards from the Regional Director at the Northern Sydney Region Awards and Recognition ceremony. Heidi Currie received acknowledgement from the Regional Director for her nomination for the Minister’s Award for Quality Teaching; Cassandra Bernie was awarded the Regional Director’s Outstanding Service to Schools Teacher Award; and James Boyer received the Regional Director’s Beginning Teacher Award. From schools across the region, only 33 teachers were recognised for teaching excellence. Lee Lowe was one of only six from the region to be awarded the Regional Director’s School Administrative and Support Staff Award.

Two of our students were among only 24 from all schools in the region to receive awards. Andrew Friery received the Regional Director’s Student Achievement Award and School Captain, Mikaila Sparkes received the Regional Director’s Award for Student Leadership.

In November, PDHPE teacher, Heidi Currie subsequently received the inaugural and very prestigious Minister’s Award for Quality Teaching from the Hon. Adrian Piccoli, Minister for Education.

It was a great honour to have so many members of our school recognised.

Boys’ Program

A group of boys in Years 9 and 10 was selected for a school-based project with the aim of increasing their employability skills, at the same time improving the school environment. Initially the students removed invasive exotic plants from existing gardens and around the school boundaries. As part of the ‘Great Penno Reno’, the group assisted by adding improved soil and using a rotary hoe to prepare garden beds. Following planting of native plant species by the wider school community, the students then applied and spread mulch on the garden beds.

The students, who devoted 75 hours to the project, received instruction and practical experience in the maintenance and operation of machinery. Mini-lessons were conducted by staff on topics such as:

- workplace behaviour
- personal protective equipment requirements
- the legal responsibilities of employers
- drugs and alcohol in the workplace
- Workplace Health and Safety issues
- accidents in the workplace.

Following the success of the program, it is hoped that this initiative may continue in 2013 and beyond.
Supporting our Students

Surviving the HSC

An enthusiastic group of Year 11 students raised funds to develop HSC survival kits. Containing tips for general wellbeing and stress management, information on counselling services and healthy food and drink, the kits were presented to Year 12 students prior to their HSC trial examinations.

Following the completion of Preliminary courses, Year 12 students and families attended an inaugural ‘Surviving the HSC’ evening. Presentations were given by a representative from the Clinical Psychologist Health Psychology Unit at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) on dealing with stress, and by a parent and a past student on how they successfully coped with the challenges of the HSC. Assessment strategies and Board of Studies requirements were also addressed.

‘Best Buddies’ Program

Best Buddies Australia was incorporated into the Pennant Hills High School student welfare program. This social inclusion program encourages the formation of friendships between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

As part of this student-led program, ‘buddy pairs’ worked together to raise funds to support the program, and to plan and participate in events such as the annual Best Buddies Day held at Parramatta Park.

10% on Top—Teacher Mentors

This mentoring program for our senior students has been implemented for the past four years. This year, 42 teaching staff volunteered their time to mentor Year 12 on an informal basis, working with individuals and in small groups. The program focused on encouragement, improvement, involvement, building confidence, time and stress management.

The purpose of the program is to provide support for senior students so that they reach their academic potential and increase their learning outcomes by at least 10%. Teachers provided ongoing support to students, presenting them with an array of appropriate strategies to assist improvement in learning outcomes.

Respect and Responsibility

We aim to create a happy and safe school by providing a positive, stable and caring environment in which each individual can develop to his or her potential. Staff are committed to the wellbeing of all students and a range of systems provide support and guidance. Our learning and support team is a proactive group, considering student issues and developing systems and procedures to recognise and support student needs.

We focus on maintaining a school climate where abusive behaviour is unacceptable. A Year 7 orientation camp was held at the beginning of Term 1, which reinforced the school values of responsibility, integrity and achievement. The SRC and the prefect body contribute significantly to the happy and safe school environment, and to students’ ability to access a wide range of learning experiences.

The LiMS program encouraged students to work for social justice, by supporting a wide range of charitable organisations.

The Premier’s NSW Student Volunteering Awards program allowed formal acknowledgement of volunteer work undertaken by students. Carissa Burbage, Mikaila Sparkes, Jorin Sonderegger, Lauren Dwyer and Daniel Bonjour received black opal certificates, the highest level in the program, which recognises a minimum of 150 hours of volunteering service. A further 12 students received diamond certificates in recognition of a minimum of 80 hours of volunteering service. Thirteen gold, 15 silver and 17 bronze certificates were also awarded to our students.

Peer support leaders and peer tutors assisted Year 7 students with their transition to high school. The Year 11 driver awareness course and the Year 10 Crossroads program both raised awareness in students of their responsibilities as members of society.
World Challenge

Planning commenced in 2012 for a team of students to research, fund and lead their own three week expedition to Malaysian Borneo through involvement in the World Challenge Program.

The expedition is preceded by 16 months of training and preparation for the 36 students and four staff involved. The program includes developing essential life skills including financial management, leadership, teamwork, communication, decision-making and organisational skills. Students have been helping to plan their itinerary and research their destination and have been encouraged to fund-raise and budget.

Student Leadership—Prefects

The prefects welcomed Year 7 students and their families in February, with a barbecue and an informal opportunity to meet staff. Year 11 prefects co-ordinated the Year 7 dance later in Term 1, which was enthusiastically attended.

Valentine’s Day was observed in the traditional style, with the prefects distributing roses and messages.

On Open Day, prefects conducted tours of the school for prospective students and their parents, in addition to performing an entertaining and informative skit highlighting the extensive range of opportunities offered by the school.

Prefects continued their tradition of charitable support, raising money for research into men’s mental health, prostate cancer and diabetes. They also raised funds for the Children’s Medical Research Institute.

Supporting our Community

‘Great Penno Reno’

Early in the year an idea was conceived to give the school a much needed facelift. The P&C took up the challenge and eagerly went about organising a weekend committed to improving the school environment.

Comprising current and former staff, parents and students of the school, a group of almost 400 volunteers participated in the ‘Great Penno Reno’ over one weekend. Work teams renovated gardens, power washed large areas of concrete and painted the PE change rooms and toilets and 12 classrooms. The volunteers’ efforts were generously supported by contributions from local businesses and individual donations.

Commercial Kitchen

A new commercial kitchen was completed which enables the school to deliver hospitality and food technology courses more efficiently and permits all vocational education and training requirements to be met. The renovation involved the complete demolition of an existing kitchen and the installation of new stainless steel benches, tables, plumbing, power and appliances. The project was funded by the NSW School Upgrade Program, with generous supplementary funding from our P&C Association enabling the purchase of a ‘combi oven’. A commercial chef trained students and staff in the use of this versatile oven, which allows them to produce food using the same techniques as leading restaurants and hotels.
Working With Our Partner Schools

Representatives from our school and partner primary schools meet each year to develop strategies to identify and target aspects of literacy and numeracy.

An Academic Challenge Day was held, providing Year 7 and 9 students with an opportunity to enhance their leadership skills. The Year 7 students, together with selected students from our partner primary schools, were engaged in problem solving, thinking and logic skills through a range of challenging activities. This is now a highly-regarded annual event on the Pennant Hills Community of Schools calendar.

We continued the successful Year 8 science gifted and talented students (GATS) program. Year 8 students tutored Year 6 via video conferencing facilities. During a subsequent visit to our campus, Year 6 were mentored by Year 8 students while performing key practical experiments related to the subject areas studied.

Our CAPA faculty continued to support primary school students with visits by Year 11 drama students promoting anti-bullying strategies through play acting, and theatresports students work-shopping with Stage 3 students. Continuing a fine tradition, our partner primary school bands played at the music festival in May and work-shopped with our high school bands later in the year.

Our involvement in the Premier’s Sporting Challenge allowed us to support our partner schools’ gala days and coaching clinics through involvement of students from Years 8 and 9.

As a Northern Sydney Region priority, Mandarin was introduced as a pilot program into our Year 7 LOTE curriculum and next year will be available to all students. Students who have studied Mandarin in Stage 3 will now be able to continue this pursuit into Stage 4.

Partner schools also used our school facilities for sporting events and formal assemblies.

Science Fair

National Science Week was celebrated through the introduction of a science fair. The event raised the scientific profile in the community by increasing participation and motivation. Students created exhibits to demonstrate scientific principles and students from partner primary schools participated in the demonstration of science projects.

Social Responsibility

Students demonstrated their care and concern for those less fortunate in our local community through a number of fund-raising activities, co-ordinated by LIMS students. In total $1360 was donated to the Children's Hospital, $900 to the Asthma Foundation, $1200 to the Best Buddies Club, $260 to the Cancer Council, $550 to the Breast Cancer Council and $458 to the RSPCA.

Students also supported the Salvation Army’s Red Shield Appeal and the World Vision 40-Hour Famine.

Our prefects held their annual Jeans for Genes mufti day fund-raiser, donating $1000 to the Children’s Medical Research Institute based at Westmead Hospital. They also raised over $250 for the ‘Movember’ initiative to raise awareness of prostate cancer and men’s mental health issues. Staff and students also donated to the annual Salvation Army Christmas Can Appeal.

Community Concert

Year 12 students produced and performed a concert for our community’s senior citizens in September. This initiative, begun in 2008, provided students with an opportunity to entertain local senior citizens in recognition of their contribution to our community. The concert, held in our school hall, was attended by more than 50 senior citizens and their carers who also enjoyed a morning tea prepared and served by our students.
School Performance 2012

Academic Achievements

HSC High Achievers

Emilie Lowe (ATAR 95.75) received a Premier’s Award for All Round Excellence in the HSC, achieving marks of 90 or above in the minimum 10 units of study. Of the 162 students who presented for the HSC, 80 achieved results above 90% in various courses and were recognised by being named in the Board of Studies Distinguished Achievers List.

At the 2012 HSC the school’s results were above state average in 11 courses with 10 or more candidates.

Pennant Hills High School had six Year 11 students who were accelerated to sit the 2012 HSC examinations in one subject one year ahead of their cohort, thus successfully completing 2 units of study for the 2013 HSC. Two of these students sat the drama HSC course and four sat for industrial technology. As a group, these six students achieved exceptional results, with five producing Band 6 results with marks of 90 or above, and one achieving Band 5.

Two Pennant Hills High School students were recognised on statewide merit lists. Matthew Miller was placed first in the state in 2 unit automotive: school based apprenticeship and Simon Begg was placed second in NSW in industrial technology. These achievements are a fitting acknowledgement of the effort and talent of our students and support from staff.

HSC Major Works

Visual Arts student Samantha Sipowicz had her artwork selected for inclusion in the ArtExpress exhibition.

Georgia Davis’s textiles major project, a bridal-inspired dress, was included in the 2012 Texstyle Exhibition.

Drama student, Benson Koschinski’s video was selected for OnSTAGE OnSCREEN, which showcases exemplary video dramas and scripts composed by HSC students across the state.

Eleven students had their HSC industrial technology major projects identified by Board of Studies examiners as being of a sufficiently high standard for inclusion in one of the InTech displays. These students were Brandon Antoon, Simon Begg, Joshua Cooper, Charles Gillings, Jonathan Hall, Logan Moore, Blake Ryan, Chris Scammell, Bronte Schuftan, Mikaila Sparkes and Corey Stewart.

ESSA

The Essential Secondary Science Assessment (ESSA) is a mandatory program which provides information about knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of Year 8 students. The results are reported in six levels from 1 to 6, with highest achievement at Level 6. Of the 157 Year 8 students who took part in the 2012 ESSA test, 38.2% achieved a Band 5 or Band 6 result in the task overall, compared to 21.7% in the state.

NAPLAN

In the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), the results across the Years 7 and 9 assessments are reported on a scale from Band 4 to Band 10.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understanding demonstrated in these assessments.

Year 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest)

Year 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest)

The Year 7 reading, spelling, writing, grammar and punctuation and numeracy scores were all above the Australian schools average.

The scores for Year 9 in all areas of literacy—reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation—were above the Australian schools average. Scores for Year 9 numeracy were also above the Australian schools average.
National Benchmarks

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum desirable standards for reading, writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar, and numeracy at particular ages. These are referred to as national benchmarks. The performance of the students in our school in Years 7 and 9 NAPLAN is compared to these benchmarks. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these benchmarks are reported in the following tables.

### Percentage of Year 7 students achieving at or above minimum standard (exempt students excluded)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>98.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>92.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>97.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Punctuation</td>
<td>96.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>96.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Percentage of Year 9 students achieving at or above minimum standard (exempt students excluded)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>97.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>84.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>95.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Punctuation</td>
<td>95.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>98.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading—NAPLAN Year 7

Reading levels in Year 7 for 2012 indicate that 17.3% of students were in the highest band (Band 9), which was above the state average of 9.8% and the 2008–2012 school average of 17.0%. Those who gained the second highest band comprised 29% which was above the state average of 18.7%.

Writing—NAPLAN Year 7

Writing levels in Year 7 show that 11% of students were in the highest band. The proportion of students who were placed in the second highest band (19%) was significantly above the state of average of 12.6%. No comparison can be made to the state and school average from previous years due to the absence of data provided to the school.

Spelling—NAPLAN Year 7

Spelling levels in Year 7 indicate that 18.4% of students were in the highest band in 2012, which was above the state average of 11.4% and above the 2008–2012 school average of 15.4%. The proportion of students placed in the second highest band (30.9%) was considerably higher than the state average (22.6%).
Grammar and Punctuation—NAPLAN Year 7

Grammar and punctuation levels in Year 7 indicated that 25.2% of students were placed in the highest band in 2012, which was above the state average of 12.9% and the 2008–2012 school average of 23.9%. The proportion of students in the second highest band (18.4%) was higher than the state average of 16.0%.

Numeracy—NAPLAN Year 7

Numeracy results for Year 7 revealed that 24.7% of students were placed in the highest band (Band 9), which was significantly higher than state average (13.5%) and the school average 2008–2012 (17.6%). The proportion of students in the second highest band was 21.6% which was also significantly higher that the state average of 12.2%.

Reading—NAPLAN Year 9

Reading levels in Year 9, 2012 indicate that 12.8% of students were in the highest band (Band 10), which was significantly higher than the state average of 6.5% and that achieved on average at the school from 2008–2012 (9.6%). The proportion of students placed in the second highest band (Band 9) was 18.3% which was considerably higher than that of state results (14.0%).

Writing—NAPLAN Year 9

Writing levels in Year 9 indicate that 10.9% of students in 2012 were in the highest band, which was higher than the state average of 7.2%. Students placed in the second highest band (18.8%) achieved higher results compared to those in the state (9.0%). No comparison can be made to the state and school average from previous years due to the absence of data provided to the school.
Spelling—NAPLAN Year 9

Spelling levels in Year 9 indicate that 7.9% of students were placed in the highest band (Band 10), which was higher than the state average of 7.2% and down on the 2008–2012 school average of 11.0%. Students placed in the second highest band indicate that 24.2% achieved higher results compared to those in the state (19.0%).

Grammar and Punctuation—NAPLAN Year 9

Grammar and punctuation results in Year 9 indicate that 10.9% of students were placed in the highest band (Band 10), which was higher than the state average of 6.6% yet down on the 2008–2012 school average of 16.5%. The proportion of students placed in the second highest band (21.2%) was significantly higher than for the state as a whole (12.9%).

Numeracy—NAPLAN Year 9

Numeracy results for Year 9 revealed that 17.2% of students were placed in the highest band (Band 10), which was significantly higher than the state average of 12.7% and that achieved by the school on average from 2008–2012 (15.5%). The proportion of students in the second highest band was 27.0%, which was also significantly higher than the state average of 11.7%.

Higher School Certificate

The average result in all KLAS was generally comparable to the corresponding means for all schools across the state. Pennant Hills High School students achieved 86 results above 90% in various courses and were recognised by being named in the Board of Studies Distinguished Achievers List in 2012, compared to 91 in 2011. In the Higher School Certificate, with the exception of extension courses, the performance of students is reported in six bands, with Band 1 being the lowest level of achievement and Band 6 the highest. In extension courses E4 is the highest band. A total of 49 students (33% of the cohort) achieved a Band 6 (or E4) result and 107 students, which represents 70% of the year group, gained at least one Band 5 result.

English

All students who studied English extension 1 were placed in the top two bands and the average mark for English extension 1 (83.2) was above the state average (80.7) and the school average since 2008 (78.4). Of students in English advanced, 67.2% achieved a Band 5 or 6, with an average mark of 81.8, which compared favourably with the state average (79.0) and the school average...
since 2008 (78.9). In English standard, 4.9% of students earned a Band 5 or 6 with an average mark of 69.1, which was above the state average (66.4) and the school average 2008–2012 (67.4).

Mathematics

Extension 1 mathematics students achieved an average mark of 74.6, which was below the state average (82.2) and the school average since 2008 (76.3). Of the extension 1 students, 74.2% were placed in Bands 5 or 6, while in mathematics, 50.0% achieved a Band 5 or 6. The average mark for the mathematics course (76.1) was below the state average (76.6) and similar to the school average 2008–2012 (76.2). In general mathematics, 22.2% achieved a Band 5 or 6, with an average mark of 70.2, which was higher than the statewide average (66.2) and slightly below the school average since 2008 (72.7).

Science

The average marks achieved by students in biology (73.4), chemistry (76.1) and earth and environmental science (74.5) were all above the state averages while the average in physics (70.8) was lower than the state average. All results were slightly below the school average since 2008. In biology, 19.3% scored a Band 5 or 6 and in earth and environmental science, 20.0% achieved a Band 5 or 6. In physics, 21.7% were placed in the top two bands and in chemistry the proportion achieving these bands was 33.3%.

Human Society and its Environment

Ancient history (66.9), business studies (78.4), legal studies (80.1), modern history (78.0) and society and culture (76.0) all achieved averages above state. The proportion of students who achieved either a Band 5 or 6 result was 20.5% in ancient history, 54.5% in business studies, 17.4% in economics, 53.6% in legal studies, 47.8% in modern history and 37.8% in society and culture. Average marks in business studies, legal studies, modern history and society and culture exceeded school average results for 2008–2012.

Technological and Applied Studies (TAS)

Industrial technology results were again outstanding, with the average mark of 85.6, significantly exceeding the state average of 69.9. One student was placed second in the state. Of the industrial technology candidates, 76.7% were placed in the top two bands. Average results in engineering studies (76.2), food technology (77.8) and information processes and technology (80.4) were also above state averages. The average result for agriculture (62.6) was below the state average. The proportion of students achieving either a Band 5 or Band 6 result was 33.3% in engineering studies, 43.4% in food technology and 61.6% in information processes and technology. Average marks in engineering studies, food technology, industrial technology and information processes and technology exceeded the average results at the school since 2008.

Languages Other than English

The small size of the candidatures (less than 10 students) in the language courses (Japanese beginners, Japanese continuers and Japanese extension) makes it difficult to effectively and reliably analyse data. Individual course results are therefore not permitted for publication.

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education

Students undertaking both community and family studies (79.9) and PDHPE (74.9) achieved averages above the state and compared to the school in the period 2008–2012. Of the community and family studies students, 55.6% achieved a Band 5 or 6 result, as did 35.0% of the PDHPE students.

Creative and Performing Arts

The average result achieved in drama (75.0) was similar to the state average (75.6), with 36.4% of the candidates receiving either Band 5 or 6. In visual arts the average mark (83.1) was significantly higher than the state average (77.7) and the proportion of students achieving Band 5 or 6 was 67.8%. The small size of the candidatures (less than 10 students) in the music and music extension courses makes it difficult to effectively and reliably analyse data and individual course results are therefore not permitted for publication.

Average Higher School Certificate Relative Performance from Year 10 (value-added)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HSC: Relative performance from Year 10 (value-added)</th>
<th>Performance Band</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 2012</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Average 2008-2012</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSG Average 2012</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: By definition, the State average relative performance is zero
Other Achievements

Competitions

Students are encouraged to enter a wide variety of state and Australia-wide academic competitions. Of the 39 students who participated in the Australian Mathematics Competition, 10% were awarded distinctions, with a further 49% being awarded credits.

Fifty students across Years 7–12 took part in the Rio Tinto Science Competition which provided them with an opportunity to test their scientific prowess. The results were outstanding and included 16% high distinctions, 38% distinctions and 22% credits.

Pennant Hills High School entered three students’ work into the University of Wollongong Faculty of Engineering 2012 NSW Senior High School Technology Competition. Mikaila Sparkes, Joshua Cooper and Chris Scammell, each of whom were accelerated into the HSC course, had their projects and folios judged by a panel from the university. Chris’s folio was judged the best project, Joshua’s best supporting folio and Mikaila’s highly regarded. Our students were judged champion team in NSW.

Displays, Exhibitions and Festivals

Students showcased their skills and abilities through a number of exhibitions and presentations which included the visual arts exhibition, the drama festival where drama students, drama ensemble participants and the dance troupe performed, the CAPA festival and industrial technology and design and technology displays. HSC drama students undertook trial performances of HSC drama works in front of live audiences, and the band ensembles were part of the highly successful annual band festival, which involved bands from partner schools. A junior and a senior team entered the National Theatresports Challenge in 2012. This was our debut at this event, and the junior team progressed to the semifinals of the competition.

The Arts

The creative and performing arts continue to provide opportunities for students to enrich their education in a wide range of arts experiences whilst making a significant contribution to the cultural life of the school and community.

Concert Band 1 achieved the only diamond award given in the A grade high school competition at the annual Yamaha Festival, which is open to all schools in NSW. This is the highest award possible in this program. The school’s Big Band won the gold medal and received a special John Morrison Award at the NSW School Band Festival, where Concert Band 2 won a silver medal. Big Band finished in second place in the Sydney Eisteddfod. Big Band and Concert Band 1 were selected to play at the Choral Festival at the Sydney Opera House.

James Walder (Year 12) was selected in the Schools Spectacular Orchestra.

Arthur Johnson and David Johnson (Year 11) were selected as members of the State Wind Band.

Kalindi White (Year 7) was chosen in the NSW Public Schools Millennium Marching Band.

Thirteen students from Years 8–12 were chosen to participate in the State Senior Music Camp, and five students from Year 7 in the State Junior Music Camp.

Grace Avon (Year 7) was chosen in the Australian Youth Choir which toured to the UK and Europe. A further four students were members of the Northern Sydney Regional Choir.

Over 70 students attended the annual band camp, which provided an opportunity for students to be tutored by visiting conductors and musicians. New students to our band programs joined other students and staff in developing their skills and abilities.

Sport

Swimming

Pennant Hills High School placed third at the Zone Swimming Carnival. The school had two age champions, Patrick Field (15) and Nicholas Rispoli (17), and records were broken in the 50m freestyle by two students, Jenny Nguyen and Nicholas Rispoli.

Twelve students qualified for the Sydney North Area Swimming Championships. At the Combined High Schools (CHS) championships, Patrick Field (15), Nicholas Rispoli (17) and four relay teams competed, with Nicholas Rispoli breaking the 50m freestyle record at this event and the 17+ Boys relay team, consisting of Nicholas Rispoli, Sam Hedges, Blake Ryan and Patrick Field, winning the gold medal.

At the National Championships, Nicholas Rispoli swam in six events, winning a gold, silver and bronze medal.
Cross Country
The school reclaimed the title of Zone Cross Country Champions. The following students achieved first place in their age group: Toby Menday (17 years boys), Adam Nixon (18 years boys), Olivia Dunn (16 years girls) and Oliver Lidbetter (13 years boys). Olivia Dunn, Charlie Dorman, Oliver Lidbetter, Toby Menday, Adam Nixon and Sean Brown represented the school at the NSW All Schools Championship. Toby Menday was selected to compete at the National All Schools Cross Country in Adelaide.

Athletics
Pennant Hills High School won the Ku-ring-gai Zone Athletics Carnival with a number of outstanding performances, and went on to win the Sydney North Region Athletics Carnival. Two Relay teams won gold medals at CHS Athletics: 14 Years Girls, comprising Caitlin Job, Erika Love, Maddison Sparkes and Taylor Jones; and 17+ Years Boys, comprising Evan Clothier, Luke Alwan, Tim Love and Jackson Ferris. Both teams went on to compete at the NSW All Schools Relay Championships, where the boys placed second and the girls fourth.

Athletes with Disabilities (AWD)
Our students performed magnificently in the AWD categories in all three disciplines, winning the Champion AWD School title at the regional swimming, cross country and athletics carnivals.

Representing the school as AWD at the regional swimming carnival were Jasper Brown, Sean Brown, Sophie Ferguson, Tristan Sassen, Jesse Thompson and Kimberley Warne. Sean Brown and Kimberly Warne qualified to proceed to CHS level.

The following students were selected to represent the Ku-ring-gai Zone in the AWD category at the regional athletics carnival: Natalia Antelmi, Morgan Boss, Jasper Brown, Sean Brown, Sophie Ferguson, Seamus Garvey, Jacob Hampson, Emmanuel Karlaftis, Nathan McKibben, Tristan Sassen, Jaz Standen, Louisa Tong, Jordan Twist, Ahrian Vogels, Kimberley Warne and Haabid Zikria.

The following athletes qualified to compete at CHS: Sean Brown, Sophie Ferguson, Jacob Hampson, Emmanuel Karlaftis, Tristan Sassen, Jaz Standen, Louisa Tong, Jordan Twist and Haabid Zikria.

Tristan Sassen (Senior Boys 100m) and Jordan Twist (Junior Girls javelin) both won bronze medals.

Sean Brown represented the school in the AWD cross-country class at regional and CHS levels.

Team Sports
Our senior triathlon team of Toby Menday, Nicholas Rispoli and Blake Ryan won the senior division of NSW All Schools Competition. This was a magnificent achievement as the All Schools triathlon competition attracts over 4000 competitors from schools across government and non-government sectors.

The following students were selected to represent Sydney North Region in their chosen sports: Jackson Ferris, Jonathan Hall and Jack Warwick (baseball), Nicholas Hey (AFL), Sam McMahon (cricket), Kate Toghill (trampolining) and Abbey Walker (hockey).

Nicholas Hey (AFL) and Sam McMahon (cricket) were selected in CHS teams.

Individual Achievements
Nicholas Hey (AFL), Toby Menday (triathlon and cross country) and Nicholas Rispoli (swimming and triathlon) were all awarded Sydney North Regional Blues. Toby Menday (triathlon and cross country) and Nicholas Rispoli (swimming and triathlon) were amongst the first inductees of the inaugural Ku-ring-gai Zone Blues.

Jordan von Hagen won two gold, one silver and a bronze medal at the NSW All Schools Diving Championships, and went on to further success with a silver and a bronze medal at the School Sport Australia Championships.

Rebeka Field was the school’s first ever recipient of the Premier’s Sporting Challenge Medal, and Nicholas Rispoli was awarded the prestigious Pierre de Coubertin Award.
Progress on 2012 Targets

Target 1
To continually develop the literacy skills of all students.
Our achievements include:
- teachers explicitly teaching relevant content and skills from the Pennant Hills High School Literacy Plan;
- weekly literacy rules published through school communication channels to enhance awareness of literacy and to encourage further development of students’ interest and skills;
- appropriate and challenging information and communication technologies (ICT) strategies incorporated into all teaching and learning programs to engage students and enhance their literacy levels and ICT skills;
- Years 7 and 9 NAPLAN results showing encouraging improvement in a number of areas. In relation to Band 9 NAPLAN results, we had a 1.7% increase in Band 9 numeracy results.
- better results in comparison to the average result of all other secondary schools in the Hills Network in Year 7 numeracy in data, measurement, space and geometry. We remain well above state average in all dimensions of literacy and numeracy. Whilst these results are pleasing, we need to concentrate on improvements in all aspects of literacy and numeracy.
- students placed in the top 5% of the Australian Mathematics Competition and the National Science Challenge.

Target 2
To continually develop the numeracy skills of all students.
Our achievements include:
- teachers explicitly teaching relevant content and skills from the Pennant Hills High School Numeracy Plan;
- weekly numeracy rules published through school communication channels to enhance awareness of numeracy and to encourage further development of students’ interest and skills;
- appropriate and challenging ICT strategies incorporated into all teaching and learning programs to engage students and enhance their numeracy levels and ICT skills;
- Years 7 and 9 NAPLAN results showing encouraging improvement in a number of areas. There has been an increase in Band 9 results in all areas of the NAPLAN examinations—2.9% increase in Band 9 reading, 4.5% increase in Band 9 writing, 5.4% increase in Band 9 spelling, 13.8% increase in Band 9 grammar and punctuation and 1.7% increase in Band 9 numeracy results.
- better results in comparison to the average result of all other secondary schools in the Hills Network in Year 7 reading and Year 9 reading, and a significantly higher average in Year 7 grammar and punctuation. We remain well above state average in all dimensions of literacy and numeracy. Whilst these results are pleasing, we need to concentrate on improvements in all aspects of literacy and numeracy.
- students placed in the top 5% of the Australian Mathematics Competition and the National Science Challenge.

Target 3
To assist all students to reach their academic potential and ensure engagement across all areas of the curriculum.
Our achievements include:
- two HSC students placing in the statewide top ten in their subject;
- 19 students receiving an ATAR of 90.0 or above, which is 13% of the Year 12 cohort (an increase of 3% on the previous year);
- 49 of our HSC students, or 33% of the cohort, achieving a total of 86 Band 6 results (E4 in extension courses). This was a ncrease over the number of students achieving Band 6 in the previous year.
- 107 HSC students, or 70% of the cohort, achieving a total of 254 Band 5 results in 21 of 33 courses;
- maintaining our position as one of the top 200 schools in NSW in the HSC;
- opening a learning centre which is staffed by a specialist teacher who provides remediation, enrichment and consolidation work for identified students;
- continuing programs such as the ‘10% on top’ mentoring program for our HSC candidates, which aims to increase their ATAR score by 10%;
- the introduction of a homework club, supported by staff volunteers, which operates after school on two days of the week;
- a significant reduction in negative behaviour referrals across the school.
Target 4
To further build on the positive links between the school, our partner schools and other community support networks that can provide support for student learning.

Our achievements include:

- student and staff collaboration with partner schools through many activities across a variety of KLAs. These include sporting gala days, the science GATS program, the Premier’s Sporting Challenge, the annual visual arts exhibition, the teaching of digital photography and combined bands. Primary school students gain an insight into our school and are supported and mentored by our high school students.
- presentations on literacy and numeracy by staff from Pennant Hills Public School at a school development day;
- regular meetings with partner primary schools to consider NAPLAN results and develop literacy and numeracy strategies.

Target 5
To provide a high quality learning environment for all students and a professional work environment for all staff.

Our achievements include:

- implementation of a PBEL program;
- housing Year 7 in home rooms, leading to a smoother and more settled transition to high school;
- development of a Learning Hub, to increase the focus on problem solving skills, critical thinking and enquiry learning;
- recognition of a number of staff at the Northern Sydney Region Awards and Recognition Ceremony for their outstanding work;
- teacher professional learning specifically focused on teaching and engaging Generation Y;
- upgrading a school kitchen to commercial standards;
- the ‘Great Penno Reno’, which saw past and present members of the school community working to improve the school environment.

School Evaluation
It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations—one related to educational and management practice, and the other related to curriculum. Our school carried out an evaluation of the Science Faculty and a review of the current length of periods in our school day.

Educational and Management Practice—Structure of the School Day

Background
The school day at Pennant Hills High School comprised 8 x 40 minute periods until 2010, when this was changed to 4 x 80 minute periods. Representatives from all areas of the school community were surveyed as part of a scheduled evaluation of the operation of the new model. Data regarding the levels of satisfaction in relation to teaching and learning were collected.

Almost all permanent members of the teaching staff, plus several long-term casuals responded. A random sample group of students, comprising 20% of students in each of Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, completed the survey online. In addition, Year 12 students were asked to complete the survey as part of their school exit procedures, with a 60% return rate. Fifty-three individuals (approximately 12% of the parent body) accepted the invitation to respond to the survey, which was posted on the school website.

Findings and conclusions
Survey questions focused on the effectiveness of teaching and learning within the school, the range of teaching and learning strategies provided to help students achieve deep knowledge and deep understanding, differentiation of the curriculum to accommodate the learning styles of students, frequency of timetabled classes, and the effectiveness of student assessment.

All facets of the survey attracted strong responses from staff, students and parents, affirming the school’s effectiveness in the areas addressed. Over 90% of staff indicated that they believed that high quality and effective teaching was occurring in classrooms throughout the school under the new model. This perspective was supported by approximately 80% of students and parents surveyed.
The majority of the staff was happy with the 80 minute periods as they enabled all criteria of the Quality Teaching Model to be effectively implemented in classrooms. This was seen as being particularly relevant to the attainment of deep knowledge and deep understanding of content and the achievement of outcomes, as students have time to develop and explore various concepts and techniques in their learning. Keeping students engaged was the greatest challenge and the need to have a broad variety of activities and teaching methods was identified. The longer period time was also seen to allow for greater differentiation between students, and for more effective assessment. However, the longer periods were found to be more demanding for younger or academically challenged students. Frequency of timetabled classes under this model was identified as an issue, with some teachers seeing students only once per week or fortnight, making it difficult to maintain continuity of learning. This was exacerbated by split classes, student absence and loss of time due to public holidays.

Students and parents shared a concern about the length of periods for Years 7 and 8, although there was general agreement that 80 minutes is the desirable length for practical lessons, and that this model was the most advantageous one for senior students.

There was consensus that the school is more settled under the longer period model, as there is less disruption and movement around the school.

Future directions

To gain optimum benefit from the longer periods, teacher professional learning (TPL) and PBEL teams need to focus on assisting teachers to develop greater strategies to improve student engagement by differentiating learning and focusing on classroom management strategies.

Curriculum—Evaluation of the Science Faculty

Background

A review team conducted an evaluation of the teaching and learning practices of the Science faculty as part of the school’s continuous improvement process. The Science faculty comprises very experienced and committed teachers, some of whom are qualified to teach in other faculty areas, such as PDHPE. Student achievement in external examinations is generally good, but teachers need to extend students more fully to achieve higher bands. In 2012, science teachers continued to focus on ways to improve results and voluntary participation in this evaluation was seen as a means of developing strategies for further improvement.

Findings and conclusions

Programming across all stages is very sound. All programs are clearly referenced to syllabus content and the indicators of the skills and knowledge required to meet syllabus requirements are succinctly stated. The resources listed for each unit are readily accessible for teachers and students to use in the classroom. There is a heavy reliance on the use of textbooks and videos in many science classes. There needs to be use of a broader range of teaching resources to support learning, in particular to accommodate the introduction of the Australian Curriculum in 2014. Some staff seek feedback from students at the conclusion of each unit of work, which is to be commended. It is recommended that this practice be adopted across the faculty.

Assessment practices are consistent with school, DEC and Board of Studies requirements. There is a good mix of assessment strategies including research tasks, reports, class tests and examinations and practical tasks. However, marking rubrics could be presented in a more consistent manner. Lessons were well planned, reflecting an excellent knowledge by teachers of syllabus content and enthusiasm for the subject. Desired outcomes from each lesson were clearly explained to students at the beginning of the lesson. There was a good mix of tasks and strategies used by staff throughout the lessons, ensuring that teachers appropriately catered for the range of students’ preferred learning styles. Staff implemented principles of the Quality Teaching Framework, notably connectedness and catering for individual learning styles. While faculty assessment policy indicates regular review of books to assess completion and quality of classwork, it was evident that this requirement was not being met consistently. It is recommended that this policy be implemented more fully in 2013.

Science teachers are actively involved in whole school activities and programs in roles such as year advisers and whole school team leaders. There was a strong focus on teacher professional learning in preparation for the implementation of science courses for the new Australian Curriculum.
Future directions
The Science faculty will continue to refine and consolidate teaching practice to deliver high quality, challenging and differentiated units of work. In 2013, staff will reflect on the analysis of data from external examinations, along with the findings from this faculty review, to incorporate strategies into future programs and practice that will enhance student performance. This should be built around staff establishing high expectations of student performance. Ongoing faculty evaluation and feedback from students and parents should inform and guide this practice.

Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction
Data was gathered from a sample of parents, students and teachers in 2012. Their responses are presented below.

Year 12 Exit Survey
Data was collected from the Year 12 cohort in the form of a student satisfaction exit survey. The vast majority of students indicated that they felt respected and encouraged by staff to do their best. There was a strong indication that students were expected to have high standards and were encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and success. There was also strong evidence that students are readily able to get assistance and support from staff, where sought.

Whilst the majority of students received useful feedback on homework and assignments, others saw this as an area requiring an ongoing focus.

Teaching and Learning
The evaluation of the structure of the school day provided valuable data on student, parent and teacher satisfaction, as presented in the School Evaluation section of this report.

Professional Learning
Total funding for professional learning activities in 2012 was $46,260. This sum was allocated to a variety of professional learning activities, with 35% of the funds spent on quality teaching, 35% on syllabus implementation, 25% on welfare and equity and 5% spent across the remaining five Teacher and Professional Learning areas. Priority project funding will be set aside in 2013 for Project Learning, PBEL and literacy and numeracy.

School Planning 2012—2014
The school planning policy provides direction for the preparation and implementation of school plans including the identification of priority areas, intended outcomes and targets that are consistent with the NSW State Plan and the Department’s planning documents. A school team has developed our strategic directions for 2012–2014. These are:

- to improve the literacy skills of all students;
- to improve the numeracy skills of all students;
- to assist all students to reach their academic potential and ensure engagement across all areas of the curriculum;
- to continue to build on the positive links between the school and our partner schools, and other community networks that provide support for student learning; and
- to provide a quality learning environment for all students and a professional working environment for all staff.

Within these priority outcomes, the school has identified a number of specific yearly targets, and updates of these are recorded below.

School Priority 1
Outcome for 2012–2014
To improve the literacy skills of all students.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- to increase the percentage of students who experience more than minimum growth in literacy skills development by 5%.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- publication of weekly literacy rules through a variety of school communication strategies to enhance teacher and student promotion of the importance of literacy and to encourage further development of students’ interest and skills;
- teachers placing emphasis on the importance of literacy in all course work and teaching literacy skills by an explicit and consistent approach;
- a consistent approach by all faculties to assessment task design and implementation of marking criteria that incorporate appropriate levels of literacy for students in all stages;
• incorporating appropriate and challenging ICT strategies into all teaching and learning programs to enhance literacy levels, student engagement and develop student ICT skills;
• professional learning for all staff in literacy according to relevant course work being delivered; and
• analysis of NAPLAN results to identify areas of greatest need in literacy.

School Priority 2

Outcome for 2012–2014

To improve the numeracy skills of all students.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

• to increase the percentage of students who experience more than minimum growth in numeracy skills development by 5%.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

• publication of weekly numeracy rules through a variety of school communication strategies to enhance teacher and student promotion of the importance of numeracy and to encourage further development of students’ interest and skills;
• all teachers demonstrating a knowledge and understanding of the numeracy plan by explicitly teaching relevant content from the plan and using effective strategies for the delivery of numeracy in course work;
• providing all staff with professional learning in numeracy according to relevant course work being delivered;
• a consistent approach by all faculties to assessment task design and implementation of marking criteria that incorporate appropriate levels of numeracy for students in all stages;
• increased student participation in external numeracy competitions;
• incorporation of the Mathletics program and other appropriate mathematics programs for students in Stages 4, 5 and 6, with the aim of extending students in mathematics;
• acknowledgement of student pride in numeracy by staff, with student best-practice samples recognised, e.g. merit certificates; and
• analysis of the NAPLAN results to identify areas of greatest need in numeracy.

School Priority 3

Outcome for 2012–2014

To assist all students to reach their academic potential and ensure engagement across all areas of the curriculum.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

• faculties sharing successful strategies in teaching and learning and assessment at whole school professional learning sessions; and
• embedding Quality Teaching Framework strategies in all teaching and learning, with staff involved in leading school improvement teams.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

• linking of teaching and assessment strategies to the elements embedded in the dimensions of Intellectual Quality and Significance within the Quality Teaching Framework;
• increased focus on recognition of academic achievement by all faculties, at assemblies within the school environment and at other public functions;
• the introduction of PBEL as a school-wide initiative to assist students and staff in ensuring a consistent approach to teaching, learning and student welfare;
• the use of exemplar answers by all faculties when giving feedback on assessment tasks and examinations to students;
• provision of additional resources for 10% on Top mentors to assist students in preparing for assessment tasks and examinations;
• co-ordination and monitoring of staff professional learning by the TPL team to ensure a focus on quality teaching;
• school teams working effectively towards improvements in teaching and learning in priority areas;
• an evaluation of the 2012–14 Strategic Plan; and
• providing staff with professional learning to equip them to lead school improvement teams.
School Priority 4

Outcome for 2012–2014
To continue to build on the positive links between Pennant Hills High School and our partner schools, and other community networks that provide support for student learning.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- to further build on the positive links between Pennant Hills High School, our partner schools and other community support networks that can provide support for student learning.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- many activities across a variety of KLAs in which our students and staff collaborate with our partner schools; and
- regular meetings with partner primary schools to develop strategies to identify and target aspects of literacy and numeracy.

School Priority 5

Outcome for 2012–2014
To provide a quality learning environment for all students and a professional working environment for all staff.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- maintaining positive relationships between teachers and students to foster high expectations.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- school bodies such as the P&C, SRC and prefects taking an active role in providing support for improving the physical environment of the school;
- explicitly teaching and demonstrating knowledge and understanding required to achieve at the highest levels;
- clear statements of all requirements on each assessment task notification;
- marking rubrics and criteria clearly explaining requirements for students to achieve at the highest level;
- the active encouragement of students through school awards systems to achieve at the highest level;
- a PBEL team to develop strategies to build a positive classroom climate;
- ongoing training for staff in PBEL;
- consistent application of school welfare and discipline policies and procedures by all staff; and
- linking of school welfare and discipline policies and procedures to PBEL.
About this Report

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

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Neil Barrowcliff Deputy Principal (Acting)
Phil Morris      Head Teacher (Chair)
Bernadette Jebbink Teacher Representative
Suelen Hands     Parent Representative
Lisa Walsh       Parent Representative
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Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at: