



Jervis Bay School

**External Validation Panel Report**  
2008



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## Introduction

Since the early nineties, government schools in the ACT have undertaken a review of operations in compliance with the Education Act applicable at that time. The *ACT Education Act 2004*, Section 24 continues to require the review of the operations of government schools at least every five years.

The School Improvement Framework calls for schools to set challenging standards and goals and document the growth toward their achievement. To evaluate the school's process of self assessment of performance, the School Improvement Framework included the establishment of a rigorous, normative protocol for external validation of each school every three years.

The self assessment of performance in all aspects of schooling and the external validation process are intended to help the school determine and gauge its progress toward meeting departmental goals, assessing the quality of its programs, its staff, curriculum, students and administration, and assessing the school's performance and its contribution to the advancement of the Department's overall mission.

## School Context

### Preamble

Jervis Bay School is located on the Naval Base of HMAS Creswell in Jervis Bay Territory. Established 94 years ago, the school's idyllic location and the community which it services ensure its uniqueness. The school's vision is to ensure that all students have the opportunity to develop their potential as individuals and acquire the skills and attitudes to contribute to the wellbeing of their world.

Jervis Bay Territory is located on the south coast of New South Wales approximately 34 kilometres south of Nowra. The majority of the land is jointly managed by the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community and the Commonwealth and is made up of Booderee National Park. Children from Wreck Bay attend Jervis Bay School. Jervis Bay Village provides housing for Wreck Bay community members, park staff, federal police and others who may work in the Territory. HMAS Creswell is a Naval Training College providing training for officers. Because of the diverse needs and expectations of community members and the transitory nature of some of the population, the school is a dynamic and constantly evolving part of the community.

In 2000 staffing numbers at HMAS Creswell were significantly reduced. This impacted on the number of families living on the base and therefore the number of children attending the school. Until this time there had been almost equal numbers of students from the indigenous community, the navy base and the village. With a larger proportion of students from the indigenous community, priorities and perspectives needed to change.

The years 2001 – 2005 were a time when there were many staff changes, student exits and over an 18 month period, five Principals (mostly acting). In the period leading up to the current school plan, attendance rates were lower than the system average, academic results were low, suspension rates high and the profile of the school in both the local and wider communities was poor.

It is from this perspective that the current school plan was devised. The school plan 2006 – 2008 provided an opportunity to refocus school improvement around improving student outcomes particularly in literacy and numeracy and developing strong and sustainable community links and partnerships to meet the needs of all stakeholders.

In the first year of the three year cycle, the review evidence stated that 100% of parents and carers, 100% of staff and 100% of students in year 5 and above indicated that they were highly satisfied with the school. Evidence obtained from the 2007 annual board report found that parents showed their support for the school by attending and positively commenting on NATSI and NAIDOC weeks, the Values Forum, sporting events and the Outreach singing program.

During the past two years the focus has been on developing mechanisms to address these areas of need within the framework of two strategic priorities:

1. Accelerate academic achievement of all students
2. Raise the profile of the school within the community

## Teaching and learning domain

### Description of school statement

The focus for the teaching and learning domain was to improve student outcomes in all areas but especially literacy and numeracy.

The key objectives were to:

- **Ensure all staff abide by agreed practice in Literacy and Numeracy teaching that accelerates student Literacy and Numeracy learning**

### Evidence cited and its validation

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| <p>Literacy and Numeracy Plans were developed and ratified by the School Board. The plans set out to provide clear frameworks for the teaching of literacy and numeracy from Preschool to Year Six.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comprehensive and well detailed plans were sighted.</li><li>• It is clear from discussions with the Principal and School Improvement Coordinator, and through classroom observations, that the plans are underpinning teaching programs in a consistent manner across the school.</li></ul>   |
| <p>Establishment of small class sizes with additional teacher assistant support, development of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for all students and an undisturbed literacy block across the school is testament to staff commitment to accelerating student literacy learning and outcomes.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small classes and teacher assistant support in place</li><li>• ILPs have been developed with links made to assessment data</li><li>• Designated literacy and numeracy blocks have been established 5 days per week.</li><li>• PIPS and school based assessment and benchmarking data demonstrated significant improvement in performance. PIPS results demonstrated that value added learning was the highest it has been at the school, with high percentages of students meeting or exceeding school benchmarks in reading, writing and numeracy. (also see '<i>Ensure pedagogy is informed by assessment</i>')</li><li>• Classroom observation confirmed that ILPs are being utilised effectively within classroom teaching programs</li></ul> |

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| <p>Extensive professional development for all staff in all areas of teaching literacy together with specific work relating to the Every Chance to Learn and The Quality Teacher Framework has also been integral to implementation of the plan.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record of Professional Development sighted</li> <li>• Quality of PD and implementation of strategies and knowledge observed in all classes and throughout the school's documentation</li> </ul>  |
| <p>An Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Plan was developed and ratified by the School Board.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT Plan sighted. The school's strong involvement in national ICT initiatives is also acknowledged by the panel.</li> <li>• In 2007, the school was singled out as being a national leader in the integration of ICT in teaching and learning.</li> <li>• Student skill benchmarks have been established for ICT.</li> <li>• The panel sighted strong evidence of the school's integrated use of ICTs to advance student learning in literacy. Classroom observations highlighted the engagement of students in their learning through ICT.</li> </ul> |

- **Ensure pedagogy is informed by assessment**

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| <p>The school utilises a consistent and comprehensive range of assessment strategies.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The panel examined detailed records of assessment and observed a range of assessment taking place in classrooms.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Teaching staff analyse assessment data to inform teaching and planning.</p>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The panel sighted evidence that assessment data is being analysed and used to inform planning</li> <li>• School based assessment data was able to be linked to ILPs.</li> </ul> |

## Commendations

The external validation panel commends:

1. Ms Jan Carr, Principal (2006 – 2008), for her strong vision, leadership and commitment to the improvement of teaching and learning at the school
2. the school for significant improvement with student outcomes in literacy and numeracy
3. the school's ongoing commitment to professional development
4. the school for its development of literacy, numeracy and ICT plans to inform future directions and ensure consistency
5. the school for its development of a school-wide process for tracking student learning to inform pedagogy
6. the school for its leadership, investment in and commitment to Information Communication Technology resources, professional development and access for teachers and students.

## Recommendations

The external validation panel recommends that the school:

1. engage in the development of school-based curriculum documentation incorporating the ACT Curriculum Framework - *Every Chance to Learn*
2. explore the Quality Teaching Framework as a tool to guide and reflect on teaching practice
3. explore relationships with local schools to share its excellence in the use of Information and Communication Technologies
4. ensure the consistent use of assessment data across the school to inform teaching practice
5. focus on the development of an oral language program that particularly supports the high number of students with a non English speaking background.

## Student environment domain

### Description of school statement

The Student environment domain has seen the school focus on strategies to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all students.

The key objective has been to:

- **Develop a Student Welfare Program that fosters resilience, responsibility and value for learning, including management of behaviour and control over learning.**

### Evidence cited and its validation

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| <p>A Student Welfare and Management Policy has been developed.</p>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The panel sighted the Student Welfare and Management Policy and staff meeting minutes relating to development of the policy. Student management procedures consistent with the policy were also observed.</li><li>• A parent information booklet detailing aspects of the policy was produced and disseminated.</li><li>• Data presented to the panel displayed a marked reduction in suspensions (from 19 in 2005 to zero in 2007 – 2008)</li></ul>   |
| <p>A restorative practices approach to student management was implemented.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Documentation and resources were sighted by the panel.</li><li>• Interviews with students indicate that the introduction of restorative practices has had a significant impact on the development of social skills, social harmony and resilience.</li><li>• Behavioural incident data also indicated a significant decline in negative behaviours since implementation of Restorative Practices.</li><li>• Surveys undertaken in 2007 showed that students and teachers believe the playground is a safe place.</li></ul> |

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| <p>Professional Development to support the implementation of the Student Welfare and Management Policy</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record of professional development indicated that staff attended Restorative Practices PD and all staff participated in social skilling and values education programs such as Circle Time, Values in Practice and Team Building through Values</li> </ul>   |
| <p>The Jervis Bay School Merit Scheme has been introduced to recognise and promote positive behaviours.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The panel sighted merit award resources and observed the system in action.</li> <li>Increased parent attendance at school assemblies when awards are being distributed strongly confirm that these awards are highly valued by staff, students and the parent community.</li> <li>Further evidence indicates that this system has enabled the school to focus on positive behaviours for students. As a consequence, attendance in the school's Thinking Room has significantly decreased.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Circle Time is used to teach social skills across the school.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The panel observed that Circle Time is mandated and is a regular component of the timetable.</li> <li>Interviews with students confirmed that Circle Time is taking place on a weekly basis and is instrumental in enhancing social skills.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Programs across the school focus on values.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The introduction of a values based program resulted in a student-led Community Forum</li> <li>Discussions with students clearly indicates that the impact of these programs has been successful in empowering students to consider the needs of others</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Programs are in place to improve student attendance.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Departmental data on student attendance indicates significant improvement in attendance rates.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>A Student Representative Council (SRC) has been established in the school.</p>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SRC minutes clearly indicate active student involvement in decisions regarding academic, social and sporting programs throughout the school.</li> </ul>   |

## **Commendations**

The external validation panel commends the school for:

1. developing a new Student Management and Welfare Policy which provides consistency across the school
2. successfully implementing Restorative Practices and social skilling strategies
3. significant improvement in student attendance rates
4. the substantial decline in suspension rates and inappropriate student behaviours.

## **Recommendations**

The external validation panel recommends that the school:

1. document the Social Skills and Values Education programs and undertake an evaluation of their effectiveness
2. identify further opportunities to improve student wellbeing and provide students with a wider range of opportunities to develop leadership skills.

## Leadership and management domain

### Description of school statement

The Leadership and Management domain has focussed on ensuring the improvements in the domains of Teaching and Learning, Student Environment and Community Involvement.

The key objectives for Leadership and Management have been:

- **All staff abide by agreed practice in literacy and numeracy teaching that accelerate student literacy and numeracy learning**
- **Pedagogy is informed by assessment**
- **Develop a Student Welfare Program that fosters resilience, responsibility and value for learning, including management of behaviours and control over own learning**
- **Enhance communication between the school and the community by providing an inclusive climate that acknowledges and celebrates individual cultural backgrounds**

### Evidence cited and its validation

- **All staff abide by agreed practice in literacy and numeracy teaching that accelerate student literacy and numeracy learning**

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| The school is utilising a variety of strategies for building on strengths in literacy and numeracy | Literacy and numeracy plans were provided and clearly demonstrate that they are working documents under continual review. From the written and oral evidence provided, it is clear that the principal's leadership from 2006 – 08 was instrumental in the implementation and resourcing of these directions and programs. |
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- **Pedagogy is informed by assessment**

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| <p>Benchmarks have been established for literacy, numeracy and ICT.</p> <p>Work relating to <i>Every Chance To Learn</i> and the <i>Quality Teaching Framework</i> has been integral to the school's examination of teaching and assessment procedures</p> | <p>The panel, through the evidence cited in the school's associated documentation and anecdotal evidence provided by the acting Principals and Executive Teacher, noted the effective leadership inherent in the establishment of Professional Learning Teams across the school between 2006 and 2008. The implementation of a team approach clearly evidences a commitment to the improvement of pedagogy in the school.</p> |
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- **Develop a Student Welfare Program that fosters resilience, responsibility and value for learning, including management of behaviours and control over own learning**

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| <p>Effective leadership in the period 2006 – 08 has allowed for the establishment of effective structures for dealing with a range of student welfare and behavioural issues.</p> | <p>Staff meeting minutes, PLT records, signage around the school, the social skills program, Circle Time and evidence of school professional development confirm these programs have been effectively implemented across the school.</p> |
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- **Enhance communication between the school and the community by providing an inclusive climate that acknowledges and celebrates individual cultural backgrounds**

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| <p>Information relating to school procedures, the commencement of school for students and the policies relating to school welfare and management have been developed and disseminated to the school community.</p> <p>Effective leadership relating to the introduction of the Outreach Singing Program, Learning Journeys and the Junior Ranger program further indicate a strategic approach to strengthening links with the community.</p> | <p>The following documents were sighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Welfare and Management Guidelines : Parent Information</li> <li>• Jervis Bay School Merit Scheme</li> <li>• <i>End of Year</i> information brochure</li> <li>• <i>Pre-school</i> information brochure</li> <li>• <i>Time to start school</i> information brochure</li> <li>• <i>2009 prospectus</i></li> </ul> <p>The panel agrees that there has been a strong sense of community involvement fostered by the Principal and staff during the past three years. Parent survey results in 2006 indicated that 100% of parents felt welcome at the school and were provided with opportunities to be involved with school activities.</p> <p>Oral evidence at a meeting of community representatives further substantiated claims in this domain.</p> |
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## **Commendations**

The external validation panel commends:

1. the leadership inherent in the development of school assessment procedures as an effective means for staff to communicate expectations and outcomes
2. the commitment by the Principal and staff to a range of programs designed to foster stronger links with all sectors of the community particularly the Indigenous community and invite further community participation in school programs
3. the establishment of a Student Welfare and Management Policy which is clearly designed to inform the community of this aspect of the school's programs
4. the school for its commitment to strengthen Jervis Bay Primary School as an inclusive community hub linking all sectors particularly the Indigenous community

## **Recommendations**

The external validation panel recommends that the executive team, staff and community:

1. establish further education and support links with Vincentia High School following transition from Year 6
2. develop strong indigenous programs in the curriculum development cycle
3. develop policies and procedures consistent with the ACTDET policy relating to the preschool – primary school amalgamation process
4. examine avenues for the reconstitution of a viable Parents and Citizens Association.

## Community involvement domain

### Description of school statement

The Community Involvement domain has seen the school focus on strategies to raise the profile of the school within the community.

The key objective has been to:

- **Enhance communication between the school and the community by providing an inclusive climate that acknowledges and celebrates individual cultural backgrounds.**

### Evidence cited and its validation

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| <p>In an effort to work more closely with the community, information about the school has been developed to inform parents about school events, practices and procedures</p> | <p>Discussions with staff and evidence sighted confirmed that a range of information dissemination resources and procedures have been developed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A workshop for families at Wreck Bay to provide information to families about school routines and learning</li><li>• Parent Information handbook</li><li>• School Prospectus for families enrolling at Jervis Bay School for the first time</li><li>• Student Management and Welfare Handbook</li><li>• The <i>Internet and Email Use</i> information booklet for parents</li><li>• weekly newsletter (distributed to families, Attorney General's Department, HMAS Creswell and Wreck Bay Community Council)</li></ul> <p>Oral evidence also confirms that the non-teaching staff of the school have developed inclusive and sensitive contacts with all members of the community to support student learning, well-being and participation at the school</p> |
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| <p>Reporting of student learning and achievement has been enhanced.</p>      | <p>Constant re-evaluation of ways to engage parents in student learning and achievement has resulted in a change to the reporting processes. Evidence offered confirmed that the realignment of the program is meeting the needs of the community. The recent Work in Progress exhibition attracted 140 community members.</p>   |
| <p>The school is involved in significant community partnership programs.</p> | <p>In 2007 the Junior Rangers Program was formalised and written to meet academic outcomes. Local indigenous Community members became more involved in the delivery of the program. All school and preschool students participated. In 2008 the Junior Ranger Program became more formalised with a Steering Committee meeting regularly. Written and oral evidence confirms that this program has been well received by the school community.</p> <p>In 2008, the ANZAC Day ceremony at the school was well attended by community members. Further community involvement has been achieved through a values and leadership program conducted for school students by the staff of HMAS Creswell. Evidence provided by school staff has indicated that this has been an additionally successful component in strengthening links with all sectors of the Jervis Bay School community.</p> <p>Evidence also confirms that the school is extensively involved with a focus group which comprises The focus group comprises representatives of Wreck Bay Community Council, HMAS Creswell, DOTARS, Booderee National Park, Australian Federal Police and Jervis Bay School.</p> <p>Involvement with the focus group has allowed the school to embed a range of programs within the school curricula.</p> <p>NAIDOC Week and NATSI Ceremonies further attest to the school's involvement in a range of culturally inclusive programs.</p> |

## **Commendations**

The external validation panel commends the school for:

1. its leading role and participation in a variety of events and programs that involve the community
2. devising a range of programs and approaches to strongly link the community with the educational, cultural and sporting programs of the school
3. the proactive way in which school executive and staff continue to seek opportunities to involve the school in appropriate community projects.

## **Recommendations**

The external validation panel recommends that:

1. the newly appointed Principal continues to focus on maximising opportunities for community participation which raise the profile of the school
2. the executive team, staff and community work to establish further educational and support links with Vincentia High School following the transition from the primary to secondary sector
3. the Principal explore with the school community the possibility of establishing a community room within the school.

## Key commendations

The external validation panel commends:

1. the executive team and staff for their concerted efforts in leading and providing varied and positive educational programs for students at Jervis Bay Primary School
2. the leadership team and staff for linking professional development with classroom practice
3. the executive team and staff for the work undertaken to develop and implement whole school assessment procedures designed to inform planning and teaching in literacy and numeracy
4. the executive team and staff for the way in which a revitalised student welfare and management program has had a positive effect on the school population
5. the executive team and staff for the proactive steps taken to consolidate and build on the school's strong ties with the local community
6. the work undertaken to develop and implement literacy, numeracy and ICT plans
7. the educational program provided by Jervis Bay Preschool which has ensured a seamless transition to Kindergarten each year.

## Key recommendations

The external validation panel's key recommendations are that the school:

1. develop and implement practices that evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes and assist in the tracking of student progress in learning across all key learning areas and particularly Literacy and Numeracy
2. develop school-based curriculum documentation including scope and sequence documents to guide teacher programming
3. develop a means to document the Social Skills and Values Education programs and undertake an evaluation of their effectiveness
4. executive team, staff and community work to establish further educational and support links for students transferring to Vincentia High School at the end of Year 6. It is also recommended that a Memorandum Of Understanding be negotiated with the New South Wales Department of Education and Training to address the anomalies associated with the transfer of interstate students to government secondary schools
5. examine the possibility of establishing Jervis Bay School as a school of excellence with strategic ties to other ACT Government schools in the areas of science and environmental education
6. focus on maximising opportunities for community participation which raise the profile of the school.

## Concluding statement

The External Validation Panel commends the school for its strong commitment to meeting its major objectives identified within the 2006–2008 school plan.

The staff show an obvious commitment to providing high quality programs for learning and teaching and the school community was enthusiastic in its approach to the validation process. Critical examination of practice, strong ownership, commitment and active participation from members of all stakeholder groups was clearly evident.

The panel acknowledges the warmth in the children's welcome and their obvious engagement in learning programs. The school ensured that the visit was extremely well organised before our arrival and throughout our stay. Staff members deserve our special thanks for their positive and helpful approach to the panel.

As chair of the panel I confirm that significant progress has been made during this school development cycle.

It has been a pleasure to undertake this validation.

## Statement of validation

The External Validation Panel for Jervis Bay School thank the principal, executive, teaching and administrative staff for the support it received over the three days of our visit.

The panel members examined all materials provided during the visit, spoke with teachers, students and parents, and participated in several class and whole school activities.

The members of the panel are pleased to validate the work that Jervis Bay School is doing in providing a quality education environment for the students of their school.

The External Validation Panel completed the Validation process at Jervis Bay School on Wednesday, 6 August 2008.

## Panel members and professional positions

Peter Trenbath  
School Leader A  
Higgins Primary School  
Signature

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Jenny Hughes  
School Leader B  
Aranda Primary School  
Signature

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Andrew Macleod  
School Leader C  
Gordon Primary School  
Signature

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Louise Bywaters  
External Lead Validator  
Signature

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Date

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