

**Bell Primary School  
4309**

**Annual Report to the  
School Community  
For the Year 2007**



State Government  
**Victoria** Department of Education and  
Early Childhood Development

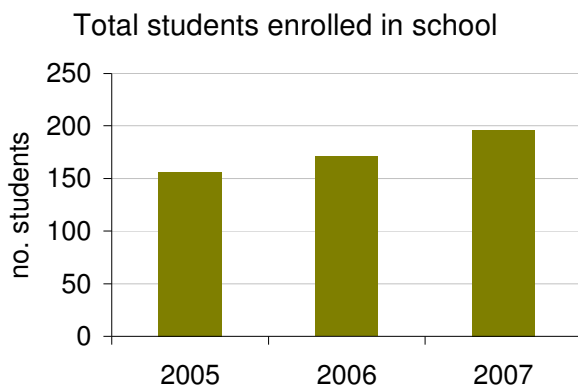


## School Overview

Bell Primary School students come from a diverse range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds which makes it a rich environment for learning. There is a particular emphasis at the school on improving Literacy and Numeracy and upon supporting students to gain the social competence that allows them to participate in the community in an effective and fulfilling way. Our long term aim is to develop children, both socially and academically, in an environment that encourages mutual self respect, tolerance and respect for others. We will be re-considering our school goals as part of our involvement in the School Self-evaluation process in 2008, but improvement of our teaching and the learning of students will always be one of the important aims of the school. Our teachers work in two broad teams and year level groups to cooperatively develop activities for students and to share information and expertise. This enables them to provide high quality teaching and support for the children in their care.

Classes at the school in 2007 were based on composite grades complemented by two straight Prep grades. Our program is a broad one and seeks to engage students, develop thinking skills and progressively develop their ability to take on responsibility and leadership roles. Information and Communication Technologies play an ever expanding role in our program, with computers and multi-media used to enhance teaching and learning in each subject area.

The changing demographics of our area have seen enrolment increase in the past several years, from 156 students at the February census of 2005 to 196 in 2007.



The upward trend in enrolments commenced in 2004 and the 2007 level was a fourteen year high. Our 2007 enrolment comprised 84 girls and 112 boys. Our Prep enrolment in 2007 was 36. As for 2006, the gender balance ran against that of the school as a whole and comprised 19 girls and 17. In 2006 there were 8 more girls than boys in Prep.

## Curriculum Developments

Through 2007 we continued work started in 2006 to revise our programs in the light of the introduction of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). This task has been led by the staff teaching and learning team and accompanied by preparation of activities for students which reflect our increasing move to incorporating thinking skills in the curriculum. A review of the homework policy was conducted and led to the development of homework matrices across the school. The school incorporated many strategies focusing on Boys Education through school-based writing workshops and science activities at Melbourne University.

There is a strong emphasis on student welfare at the school and this continued in 2007 with the introduction of the Start-Up program and an extensive Values Education Program for students in years 4-6. In 2007 the school became an accredited "Go for Your Life" school, a program, which addresses issues of student health and wellbeing.

## Staff

Morale at the school is high with the average score for teacher satisfaction on the annual staff survey run by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development being 78.2% in 2007. The survey is on a scale of 0 to 100 where 100 is the highest possible score. The average number of days absent per teacher during the year was 2.91 days. Each year there is a small changeover of staff and, of the 11 ongoing teaching staff at the school in June of 2006, 8 were still at the school in June of 2007 (73%).

Teachers undertook many professional development activities across the year. This included working with colleagues from other schools on a program aimed at fostering Boys Education. Staff took part in Values Education professional development that led to the development of units of work and leadership program for students. Work was also commenced on introducing a performance and development culture to the school.

As for all Victorian Government Schools, all teachers at the school are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. The requirements for teacher registration can be found at [http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?Document\\_ID=241](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?Document_ID=241)

## Working with Parents

The partnership with parents in the education of children is taken very seriously at the school. This is evident through the work of the Active Dads group, Fundraising Group, Bell Arts Group and “Bell Talks” a series of community forums which were conducted throughout the year. All of these groups strongly supported the school and contributed to the richness of our program. Involvement is welcomed in all areas of school, from the classroom for which training is available, to the School Council.

In 2007 the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development contacted 41 families of our students seeking information on how satisfied they are with the school. Whilst the results showed high levels of satisfaction, only 21 parents (51%) responded to the survey. This makes it difficult to know how accurately the results reflect opinions of the majority of parents. We would encourage parents who receive the survey in 2008 to respond as it helps us to identify areas that may need improvement. In 2007 our score was 5.43 on a scale from 1 to 7. This is marginally lower than in 2006.



## **Principal's Report**

2007 saw Bell PS continue to grow both in size and as a school underpinned by strong community support. The school remained committed to the provision of a challenging, comprehensive and relevant curriculum for all students. Teachers continued to work in teams both in the sub-school areas in which they taught and as a member of either the Teaching and Learning team or the Wellbeing team. A variety of extra-curricular programs across the school were provided supplementing an already rich classroom program. The dedication and hard work of both the teaching and administrative staff in all areas, along with the support of parents in a myriad of ways provided excellent learning opportunities for all students.

The school was successful in obtaining two major federal government grant applications. The first being \$62,000 for the establishment of a Teaching and Learning Centre in our multi-purpose room. The second being \$40, 000 for installation of new water tanks and water efficient plumbing bubble taps and taps for the girls toilets. We are also working with DEECD in regard to implementation of our electrical upgrade.

Work was commenced on the development of the school Strategic plan (2009-2012). The plan will document what the school aims to achieve over the next four years and how it intends to achieve it. The Strategic Planning process will conclude in 2008.

Janet Ringrose (Acting Principal)

## **School Council President's Report**

What a year it's been for the continuous improvement of our school. 2007 commenced with student numbers increasing to just below 200 and we welcomed Emily Dimitracopoulos as acting principal. The Bell Talks group was established, held a community forum and made recommendations for use of the 2006 fun day funds. The funds were allocated to new outdoor play equipment, classroom resources, library resources, sporting equipment and a strategic plan for the heating and cooling of our buildings. The toilet upgrade was completed and enabled improvements to both the inside and outside facilities.

The FUNdraisers were back at it again, and we saw our strong, unique, vibrant community come together for the Bunnings sausage sizzle, trivia night and yet another Election Day-Fun Day Fete. The Gardens and grounds team were focussed on rejuvenation of ovals, construction of new bench seating near the southern oval and development and implementation of the new 'Natural and Creative play area'. This display of strong community involvement is evidence that the Bell school community continues to strive for continuous improvement and is united in our vision for the school: to be leaders in primary education, challenging and supporting each other.

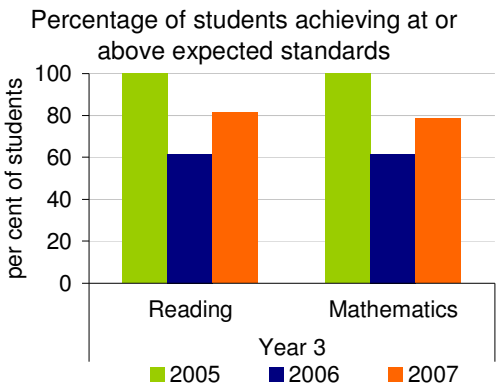
I would like to thank everyone who helped out at school or contributed to sub-committees during the past year. Thank you to Emily Dimitracopoulos, Cresten Pearce, Barry Swale and Ruth Vonarx for your respective terms as Principal.

Anthony Griffiths (School Council President)

# Student Progress & Achievements

## Student Learning

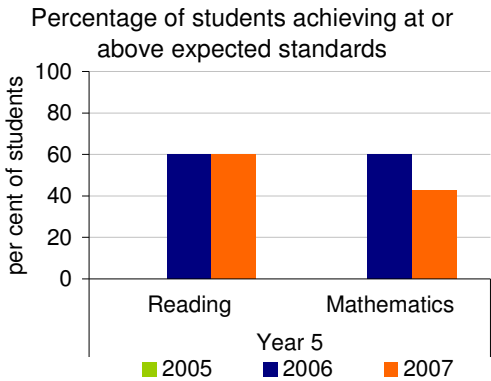
One of the school’s long term goals is to expand achievement levels in the Literacy and Numeracy of all students. Although this goal will be re-visited as part of the schools involvement in the Self-Evaluation process in 2008, seeking high achievement levels in literacy and numeracy will always be an important aspect of the school. A fair degree of variation in our results has to be expected from year to year as group sizes are sometimes small and the performance of one or two children can have a large effect on our overall percentages and averages.



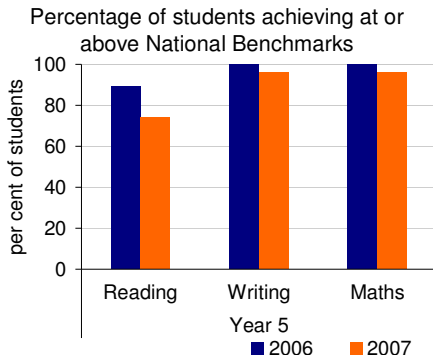
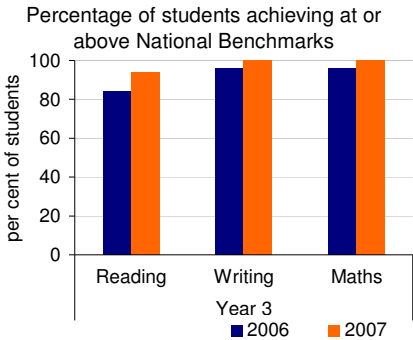
In 2007 the largest Year 3 group for the past five years undertook statewide Achievement Monitor testing (28 students). The percentage of these students reaching expected standards was in the order of 80% for both Reading and Mathematics.

The average for the group was significantly above that of the state for Reading and the same as the state for Mathematics. A high percentage of students did not undertake the test in 2005 (36%) and this led to a very high, but unfortunately probably inaccurate, result.

In 2007 the percentage of Year 5 students reaching the expected Reading standard was in the order of 60%. This gives an average result slightly below that of the state and it is an area we will need to target. Similarly, Year 5 Mathematics will be an area marked out for improvement. The 2006 result comes from only 10 students and it is difficult to make reliable comparisons between the two years. In 2005 less than 10 students participated and this data is not included due to the low numbers.



A high percentage of students reached National Benchmark levels in 2007. At Years 3, 100% of students reached the benchmark in both Writing and Mathematics. Our school uses the higher AIM benchmark to measure progress.



## Student Pathways and Transitions

Our Prep intake in 2007 was 36 students, an increase of 6 over the previous year. The two prep grades moved into the Early Years unit, a large multi-level space that has allowed for the development of a more active, hands-on curriculum to support student transition into school.

In 2007 the parent survey score for “Transitions” was 5.61 on a scale from 1 to 7, where 7 is the highest possible score.

Teachers set out to support both students and parents as children commence Prep. A good

deal of planning and consultation with kindergartens was undertaken in 2006 to ensure incoming students for 2007 felt secure and their learning needs were met. Information sessions were run for parents of incoming students and students visited the school to familiarise them with the learning environment, expectations and to enhance their confidence. Part of the program entails the allocation of a Year 6 student as a “Buddy” for each Prep. The Buddy system is a good way of giving individual support for students new to the school. It also encourages older students to take on responsibility and to further develop leadership skills.

The Year 2 to Year 3 transition is a particularly important one. At Year 3 there is increased emphasis on students understanding what they are reading. The Early Years program in Years Prep to 2 concentrates firstly on learning to read and some students find it difficult to not only read what they see on the page, but also to understand and comment upon the text. Teachers track the progress of individual students through this transition point. As well, we monitor the success of the transition of the whole group by comparing data from running record reading testing at Year 2 and AIM reading testing for the same group of students at Year 3.

In 2007 the average Year 3 AIM result was well above that of the state and higher than would have been predicted by Early Years assessments. The implication from this is that, taken overall, the group has made the transition with no indication of a specific difficulty with comprehension in reading.

The school provides a transition program for Year 6 students in cooperation with secondary colleges to familiarise them with their new settings and make the move as smooth as possible.

## Student Engagement and Wellbeing

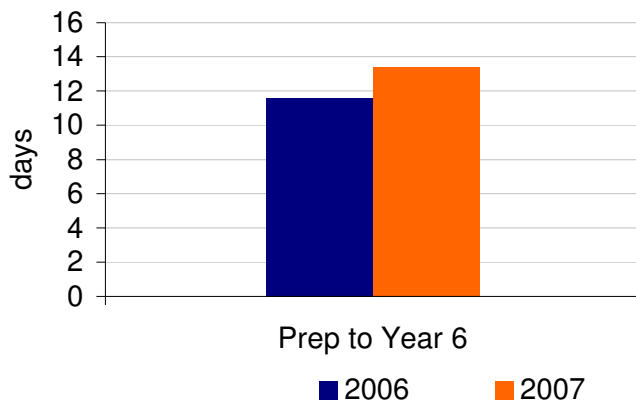
Student welfare is one of the two staff professional learning teams at the school. Considerable support is provided across the whole school. The needs of individual students and families are also addressed through our welfare coordinator. The “You Can Do It” program is used across the school, and 2007 saw the school incorporate the modules on resilience. There is also a broad range of intervention and support programs. These include camps and excursions, a school choir, school band, before and after school care and provision of “emergency” lunches. Lunch time activities are run for students in the multi-purpose room, with staff looking to encourage positive play and develop friendship groups. The “Start Up” program was trialled at the start of 2007 and will be continued. This seeks to develop classroom relationships, embed agreed school values, define responsibilities and expectations and assist students to set goals for themselves.

In 2007 our average absence for the whole school combined rose a little over that for 2006. The rise was 1.8 days per student.

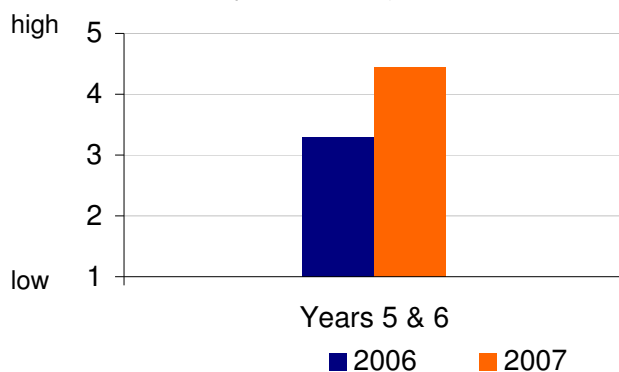
The way in which average absence is calculated changed in 2007. This makes it difficult to compare figures from any year except 2006. On average each student had 13.4 days away from school in 2007. This compares with a state average of 13.2 days per student in 2006. The rise occurred across most year levels and runs counter to past trends at the school.

It is important that children attend school every day and the challenge for students, parents and staff is to improve attendance in 2008.

Average number of absent days per student



Student connectedness to school  
 (average score on scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is best possible score)



Each year the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development surveys our students on “Connectedness to school”. This asks students to comment on statements such as:

“I enjoy the work I do at school”,  
 “I look forward to going to school” and  
 “Learning in my school is fun”.

Students said they felt highly connected to the school in 2007, with an average score of 4.43 on a 5 point scale. The high score is very pleasing as it is well above that for 2006.

## **Future Directions**

2008 will be an important year for the school as it will include undergoing the School Self-Assessment. This is a process whereby the year will be used for teachers, parents and students to cooperatively reflect upon our successes over the past three years and upon those areas that we would like to see improved. These reflections will be used to develop a Strategic Plan that identifies particular areas we will seek to improve over the coming four years. Opinions of parents and the wider community will be sought as part of this process, especially in terms of the aspirations held for students and the underlying vision and broad school goals that will guide the school curriculum and programs.

Although the review will set some of our future goals, strategies and targets we will still be working hard through the year to meet our existing goals. This is particularly the case for maintaining and further improving student achievement in literacy and numeracy. Through our participation in the regional David Hopkins Action Zones project all staff will be involved in extensive professional development related to literacy and numeracy. Our professional learning teams will review our current practices and look for opportunities to strengthen our curriculum provision. More extensive use will be made of information on student progress to guide us in planning programs and teaching strategies. As part of this process teachers will be encouraged to share their expertise, monitor their teaching and constantly improve their classroom practice.

Further work will be undertaken to foster a performance and development culture within the school and to reach the standards required to be accredited.

We will also continue our emphasis on the wellbeing needs of all students and particularly of those who have special needs of one kind or another, including those with high potential. One-on-one support for students and families will continue to be made available through our wellbeing staff. The “You Can Do It” program will continue as a broad support program for students and as a means of developing student skills in organisation, resilience, persistence, getting along and confidence. Attention will be given to increasing school attendance.

Improvements to our transition program will see expanded consultation with Kindergarten teachers regarding students beginning at Prep. Visits of Year 6 students to the secondary colleges will be arranged in conjunction with the Stepping Up in the North guide to state education. Advice will also be available via the on line Transition Program that has been developed by the Darebin network of schools. These activities have the underlying aim of making the transitions students undergo as smooth as possible.

In 2008 we will be undertaking several major capital works projects, including the upgrade of our multi-purpose room into a teaching and learning centre, the installation of water tanks and an electrical upgrade.

This year also marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the school and provides us with an opportunity to celebrate both the past, and present with our school community.

All in all, we face a busy year in 2008 and into the future.

## Financial Performance

We are in a strong financial position and are improving facilities to meet the needs of students currently at the school. The Locally Raised Funds category includes money for school camps.

Financial Performance for the year ending 31st December, 2007		Financial Position as at 31st December, 2007	
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>2007 Actual</b>	<b>Funds Available</b>	<b>2007 Actual</b>
DE&T Grants	\$294,8025	High Yield Investment Account	\$59 612
Commonwealth Government Grants	\$9,702	Official Account	\$8 196
State Government Grants	\$8,147	Other Bank Accounts( listed individually)	\$80 000
Other	\$31,038	At Call Investment	\$20 598
Locally Raised Funds	\$190,600	(insert)	
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$534,289</b>	(insert)	
		<b>Total Fund Available</b>	<b>\$168 406</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		<b>Financial Commitments</b>	<b>2007 Actual</b>
Salaries and Allowances	\$139,316	Accounts Payable Control	\$0
Bank Charges	\$366	Camps/Excursions	
Consumables	\$40,477	Building/Grounds including SMS	\$89 500.00
Books and Publications	\$10,236	Special Programs inc Student Services	\$0
Communication Costs	\$11,163	Region /Clusters Funds	\$0
Equipment / Maintenance	\$31,527	Professional Development	\$1400.00
Utilities	\$11,133	Other ( please list) Free Fruit Friday, OSHC, PRC, Fundraising	\$49 557.41
Property Services	\$138,282	School Operating Reserve	\$27 948.59
Travel and Subsistence	-	<b>Total Financial Commitments</b>	<b>\$168 406</b>
Motor Vehicle Expenses	-		
Administration	\$12,304		
Health and Personal Development	\$533		
Professional Development	\$8,693		
Trading and Fundraising	\$31,329		
Support/Service	\$8,749		
Camps and Excursions	\$39,719		
Miscellaneous	\$2,553		
<b>Total Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>\$486,379</b>		
<b>Net Operating Surplus/- Deficit</b>	<b>\$47,910</b>		
<b>Capital Expenditure ( Cases 21 Finance Only)</b>	<b>\$5,756</b>		
Please note that the above amounts do not include any credit revenue or expenditure allocated or spent by the school through its Student Resource Package			

## School Contact Information

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Acting Principal:	Janet Ringrose
School Council President:	Anthony Griffiths
Telephone:	9480 5622
Email:	<a href="mailto:bell.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au">bell.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au</a>
Web Site	<a href="http://www.bellps.vic.edu.au">www.bellps.vic.edu.au</a>

The report contains data from the School Level Report. If you would like access to the School Level Report, please contact the school.

### Glossary of Terms Related to Student Learning

#### National Benchmarks

The National Benchmarks are a set of indicators or descriptors which represent nationally agreed minimum acceptable standards for literacy and numeracy at a particular year level. In this context 'minimum acceptable standard' means a critical level of literacy and numeracy without which a student will have difficulty making sufficient progress at school.

#### Achievement Improvement Monitor

The Achievement Improvement Monitor (AIM) is a state-wide assessment and reporting program in English and Mathematics for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. The AIM program provides an indication of how well the literacy and numeracy skills of students are developing at an age appropriate level.

For further information related to departmental terms please refer to:  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/jargonbuster/>