A Year of Significant Change

2009 has been a year of significant change. At the end of Term 2 the Principal, Judy Parker left the school to take up a position in DECS and Marg Erwin, the Deputy Principal, became Acting Principal for Term 3 until the appointment of Mark Hansen at the beginning of Term 4.

The support Marg gave, over Terms 3 & 4 to the school community and Mark, as he transitioned into his new role, needs to be acknowledged as her outstanding leadership, organizational and people skills successfully supported everyone through a complex period.

An added dimension of complexity was added to the year by the Federal Government’s implementation of two economic stimulus packages: The Building the Education Revolution program (BER) and the National School Pride (NSP) initiative.

The BER provided a $3 000 000 grant to build a new hall and library, negating the need for the school to fund this project itself. A School Pride Grant of $200 000 was also provided for other refurbishment work.

The year ended with the demolition of the demac building and the commencement of site work, which will transform our school.

2010 is the 30th Anniversary of our school and a year in which we will have much to celebrate.
The provision of rich & diverse curriculum

Our experienced staff competently delivers quality learning in the eight areas of learning of the SACSA Framework (South Australian Curriculum Standards & Accountability). Classroom teachers provide learning experiences in English, Maths, Health & P.E., Studies of Society & Environment and some aspects of The Arts & Technology. Specialist teachers provide learning experiences in Japanese, Music/Drama and Science & Technology. Information Communication Technologies (computers etc.) are an integrated aspect of most other learning areas.

Research informs us that involvement in extra curricular activities is important in children’s literacy as it enriches their experiences, develops their vocabulary and fosters positive learning attitudes. We have continued to provide broad learning experiences for our students. This has been possible because of staff and parent commitment.

2009 saw us farewell two long serving teachers Meagan Lowery and Robyn Mills. Meagan retired and Robyn moved as a part of the ten-year placement process.

Music - Our Annual Music Concert showcased the skills and talents of our students. We have approximately 100 students learning musical instruments. These students are able to participate in one of our three bands, perform at the Primary Schools’ Music Festival as well as assemblies and other performance opportunities.

In 2009 a new singing group was established for year 5-7 students called the Ardtornish High Notes. This group performed at the Music Concert and at their own end of year concert.

The Senior drama group along with students in rooms 19, 20 and 27 presented an outstanding performance of “Heart of the Dreaming” in term 4. This spectacular production had up to 90 children on stage at the same time singing and dancing and was visually outstanding.

Dance & Aerobics teams have continued with outside providers. 24 dance students participated in the National Titles. 25 students from years 4-7 took part in the National Aerobics Championships in Adelaide. The Jobi Rockers came 7th, the Chatterboxes 10th in their section. The Latin Ladettes came 7th and the Fabulous Four achieved 6th place.

The Ripper Skippers, our skipping demonstration team continued to perform in other schools and at district events due to the efforts of a staff member and a parent.

The Ard Rocket, an example of persistence and teamwork, once again participated in the Annual Pedal Prix Competition with a new and improved vehicle.

SAPSASA participation by our senior students was once again at very high levels. Individuals and teams achieved at district level in most sports and at state level in touch football. One student also went on to play in the SA Girls Cricket Team.

Our school came fourth in the Japanese Hiragana Competition for the North East District.

Again a number of our students achieved highly in various National Competitions.

Maths 5 distinctions, 13 credits
Writing 1 credits
Science 3 distinctions, 8 credits
English 1 high distinction, 3 distinctions 6 credits
Westpac Maths 2 high distinctions, 6 distinctions, 17 credits.

Gardening, an elective programme for upper primary students has ensured the development and maintenance of the garden enclosure.

The wide diversity of experience is highly valued by our students and at our very special Year 7 Graduation Ceremony we celebrated the outstanding achievements our students have made over the course of their primary education.

Improvements in student relationships

At Ardtornish we teach specific skills that support students to develop positive relationships with a range of people. We gather data to monitor how well these skills are being used and what further skills and process might need to be taught. This data assists us to better understand individual students, as well as giving us a picture of the whole school.

Percentage of Students Reporting Bullying over one week in Term 3 each year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is the belief of the staff that the increased reporting of bullying in 2009 is directly linked to providing students with both the skills and confidence to report incidents and ensure that bullying behaviour is addressed.

Following the bullying survey staff a staff meeting was dedicated to analysing the data and making some key recommendations for future action.
From the data and their own experiences staff commented on what we are doing well. This included:

- Following up bullying issues
- Teaching students the language of harassment and strategies which can be used
- Using classroom rules and consequences
- Listening to students
- Involvement of parents and behaviour support when necessary
- Surveying students each year
- Students are accessing support
- Statistics overall are declining

Many classes have used the “Wheel of Choice” as a focus for discussing strategies to empower students to take action against bullying and harassment.

From the data and their own experiences staff identified the following issues:

- The insidious nature of some bullying
- Students being left out or excluded from group activities
- Encouraging more upper primary students to report
- The need to further develop resiliency in students
- The need to remind students, on a regular basis, what constitutes bullying
- Explore further the concerns of students who do not report bullying
- JP Playground was again identified as a problem area as students in the early years lack effective social skills to enable them to negotiate conflicts
- The need to put in place very specific strategies for particular students who are identified as regularly using bullying behaviour

Percentage of Students Who Support School Values - (make appropriate behaviour choices).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>74.50%</td>
<td>75.90%</td>
<td>81.70%</td>
<td>83.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well</td>
<td>84.30%</td>
<td>87.40%</td>
<td>91.75%</td>
<td>92.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Records</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>596</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During 2009, in addition to usual practices staff used a Behaviour Code Protocol, which assisted in improving consistency of practice.

Recommendations / Implications for the future.

The following key areas were identified as essential elements required in the curriculum at Ardornish Primary School R-7.

- Further develop common language
- Staff wear fluoro vests, to maintain visibility.
- All classes are involved in a social skills program such as Program Achieve (getting along)
- Explore and implement ways of teaching students about Cyberbullying
- Regularly revisit the ‘Wheel of Choice’ and bullying brochure with students
- Dealing with being left out. What can students do?
- Implement a peer mediation program
- Explicitly teach school values
- Update our formal ‘Bullying Policy’
- Involve our Christian Pastoral Support Worker, CPSW in further supporting students to develop positive student relationships.

Site Improvement Priorities

The 2008 – 2010 Site Improvement plan priorities remained the focus for improvement of student learning outcomes in 2009 however an analysis of our operational plan, at the end of the year, indicated that, in line with regional advice, we need to more sharply focus on fewer priorities to ensure they are achievable.

The site Improvement Plan will be refreshed through consultation in 2010.

1. Improving Cognitive Well Being

Increase the percentage of students who demonstrate:

- motivation, goal persistence, organisation, mastery.
- an understanding and application of a range of ways of thinking
- an ability to think creatively/innovatively/deeply for enterprising solutions to relevant issues.

Strategies

1.1 The Development of Thinking Skills

Actions Taken:

- Teachers identified an enquiry question relevant to their learning needs and students.
- Staff participated in two professional learning days. One with Julia Atkin focussing on the SA Compass and the other held at the Special Education Resource Unit focusing on the development of thinking skills across the school.

Outcomes

- 75% of our teachers are using the teaching of thinking skills in their program. Most of the remaining teachers were new staff or NIT teachers.
- 37.5% of teachers explicitly taught students about the brain
- 75% of teachers reported that the Smartboard has assisted in engaging students in deeper thinking about their learning.
75% of teachers were explicit with students about our focus on cognitive well being and the teaching of thinking skills.

Staff reported their students were using a common language about thinking. It was also reported that staff had noticed students being more creative and their engagement in a range of learning activities had increased.

Students seemed better able to record and discuss their thinking and were more confident to try something new.

Students were actively reflecting on their learning and acknowledging what was new knowledge.

Recommendations / Implications for the future.

As a result of our work in this area it is recommended that we further develop students’ thinking skills to focus on Reading Comprehension (Northern Adelaide Region focus area). Many staff indicated a need to develop greater consistency in the teaching of reading.

1.2 Establish a Christian Pastoral Support Worker (CPSW) to Support students, staff and families.

Jo Mickley was appointed to this position and the following actions were undertaken.

- developed relationships with parents, students and teachers which lead to the identification of students that required support to deal with issues related to either school or home life.
- established resources for parents to enable them to learn more about community services
- supported staff through discussion: morale building
- provided hands on support for class and school programs
- provided links between local community groups and the school and organized personnel for additional support work.
- implemented a parent support group with a focus on Aspergers and Autism.
- implemented a Mentoring Boys program.

Outcomes

- assisted a number of students to address a variety of personal and school based issues on a one to one basis.
- assisted groups of students to build better friendships.
- staff in class had additional support when it was requested to meet particular students needs.
- Groups of boys became more positive about their schooling experience
- K-kids club built students awareness of community needs.
- lunchtime activities brought together students with similar interests.

- parents with particular concerns about their children were linked together to share resources and ideas

Recommendations for the future

- To continue existing programs.
- To offer a grief and loss program (Seasons for growth) to support students going through family break down.

1.3 To enhance student voice and leadership in the school.

Actions Taken

Under the leadership of Lisa Bradshaw our student voice coordinator in 2009 we:

- Modified the Student Representative Council to suit the needs of students and staff.
- Developed an Executive Committee within the SRC to give older students greater responsibility for the group.
- Sent representatives to the Global Leadership Convention.
- Trained Peer Mediators and established a Peer Mediation program within the school.
- Had students organize and run their own fundraising events to meet identified needs related to charities and school programs
- Increased student control of Assemblies.
- Modified how The Terrific Kid recipients were identified.

Outcomes

- The SRC became more effective as a decision making and action group by modifying its membership structure and the processes it uses.
- A strong Executive Committee was established that monitored the progress of agreed actions
- All year students understand what Peer Mediators are and are able to access them in the yard to support with the resolution of conflict.
- The JP playground has three students at each lunch break supporting safe play.
- 4 Students were given a greater perspective of other children in the world and shown the resilience of others through involvement in the 40 hour famine Global Leadership Convention, held at AAMI stadium.
- The school SRC raised a total of $1468.80 for the 40 hour famine charity event.
- SRC sold Bandanas to raise, $180.00 for Children with cancer.
- Terrific Kids recipients were not chosen for their popularity but for the way in which they demonstrated agreed values.
Recommendations / Implications for the future.

- To once again send students to the Global Leadership Convention in 2010.
- Instead of undertaking individual fundraising, Casual Days be used for specific fundraising and one of these days could be for the 40 Hour Famine.
- To annually train Year 5 students as peer mediators.
- To roster mediators on yard duty each day
- For Trained Mediators to volunteer to run lunch time activities if they are not rostered on.
- To analyse the annual bullying survey to consider how Peer Mediators could address areas of concern in the playground.
- Review how the school captains are selected.

1.4 To support the use of learning technologies to enhance student engagement and learning.

The appointment of Steven Whitehead as a coordinator in ICT in 2009 was made to ensure that staff would receive the training necessary to ensure the investments we have made in technology impact positively on student learning.

Actions taken

- Computer room 1 was refurbished
- Smart board training was provided to staff
- Provided staff with regular professional development to assist them to better incorporate the use of the internet into classroom programs
- Established a documented whole school technology continuum to guide instruction in the use of technology at each year level.
- Began redeveloping the school website.
- Developed an intranet for staff and students
- established a school media group
- produced a series of DVD’s that celebrated and recorded major school events.
- Implemented a comprehensive year 6 and 7 cyber safety course.
- Moved the school to a private ISP to increase internet access speeds

Outcomes.

- Teachers increased in their confidence using the internet and 100% reported that they now regularly make use of web based resources when planning
- 92% found that the hardware available to them was now more effectively meeting their needs.
- Students are being introduced to software use in a systematic manner
- Both parents and students are more aware of cyber safety issues
- The media group produced a documentary that reached the semi-finals of a SA Film contest and the “LA My Hero Contest.”
- A group of parents reviewed the school’s existing website and provide improvement ideas

Recommendations / Implications for the future.

- To upgrade the computers that are driving the interactive whiteboards
- Upgrade switches and cabling to further increase the speed of network
- To provide ongoing training to staff in the use of:
  - Smartboards
  - Targeted software
  - ICT to communicate more effectively
- Support staff to integrate digital media into literacy
- Model to staff the variety of ways in which ICT can be integrated across the curriculum.

1.5 Wellbeing for Learning - Health

A range of programs and activities were initiated and enhanced through receiving a Healthy Active Australia Grant of $58,660.00. Marg Holloway was appointed as a coordinator to facilitate this priority.

Actions taken:

- Implement staff development programs including:
  - participation in the Blue Earth Training.
  - use of the Outdoor Gym equipment
  - Cognitive Wellbeing.

- Implement physical activity programs and increase student fitness levels
  - staff identified ideas for inclusion in the Healthy Expo.
  - Fitness testing took place with Years 4 - 7 with Jo Dinunzio. Data was compiled and recorded with testing that took place in 2006 and 2007.
  - Data from 2009 to be analysed early 2010 and action planned based on results.
  - Library staff initiated a ‘Walk to Melbourne’ program encouraging student participation.
  - All Classes involved students in organised daily fitness sessions eg. regular running; record / reward achievement, certificates, staff role modelled fitness activities.
  - ‘Brain Break’ made a part of classroom practice with healthy food focus.
  - Students published newsletter items showcasing their work with Healthy Lifestyles.

- Implement Healthy Eating Programs
  - conducted a week long Health Expo which involved both whole school and individual class activities. Special events included Tai Chi, ‘Junkfood Jim’ Performance, Dietician, Chef, Microbiology, Massage, Tai Chi and cooking demonstrations.
  - classes were involved in a variety of classroom based activities to promote health and wellbeing. Michelle Smale and canteen volunteers provided special ‘healthy’ lunch options daily and special tasting of fruits, breads and soups at recess times.
All classes attended sessions with the Life Education personnel, staff ran recess activities – skipping, cloud watching, the school band performed at recess and different cultural games were shared.

Parents and caregivers supported in a variety to roles. Library staff conducted lessons for R – 7 based on the Right Bite resources.

Cooking classes took place with students in some classes preparing healthy meals. ‘Packaging free’ days were used as a focus to minimise rubbish and lessen the intake of processed foods. Health lessons focussed on Healthy Lifestyles and choices.

- **Conduct Healthy Workshops for Parents** –

Parent workshops included: Nutrition for Children and Adolescents with a Dietician, healthy cooking sessions with a qualified Chef and a presentation by a Muscular Skeletal Specialist were facilitated. Newsletter items promoted our Healthy initiatives including a weekly section using the Right Bite resources will continue.

- **Trial students eating their lunch earlier in the day in terms 1 and 2.**

After consideration of all the information from parents, students and staff, staff made the decision to revert back to our “old” timetable.

The trial of early lunch along with the Healthy Expo Week focussed the community’s attention on the importance of healthy eating. We noticed that students in general were eating more healthily but significant change in behaviour and concentration were not evident.

Some of the other factors we considered in making our decision included:
- Seemed an ‘unnatural’ time for eating lunch.
- Students being hungrier towards the end of the day.
- Children who’d eaten a wholesome breakfast were finding the lunch too early.

- The trial timetable meant that some students and staff (due to lunch time activities) weren’t getting a break until 1:35pm. For some people the trial times were impacting negatively on preparation and delivery of the curriculum.

**Some ideas staff have suggested:**

Further consideration required for when and how recess and lunch eating times best help students, more training and development with structured fitness programs, students to compare fitness levels of themselves and others, continue whole school activities and focus days.

Bin surveys still indicate considerable food wastage and this will need addressing in 2010. Publication of the APS ‘Healthy Foods’ cookbook is pending.

### 3. Improving student outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

Each year a new cohort of students enters the school bringing with them a unique social, physical and intellectual profile.

Some years we have a higher percentage of students with communication difficulties that can impact on their rate of achievement.

The challenge facing us is to not only continually improve our intervention strategies but also our general classroom practice in ways that can best support their learning.

**Actions**

In 2009 we undertook the following actions to address literacy needs in the early years of school:

- All year 1 student progress was analysed and those who were experiencing difficulties developing their literacy skills were provided with targeted intervention.
- Teachers met regularly to develop Individual Learning Plans, monitor progress and develop appropriate and consistent classroom based strategies to support these students.
- A school services officer was employed to assist students individually or in small groups to develop identified skills.

**Outcomes:**

- 75% of students involved made significant progress, particularly with their reading.
- Students who made limited progress because of factors impacting on their development such as speech and language issues, have had appropriate measures put into place to support their learning in the future.

**Recommendations / Implications for the future.**

- Work towards improved and consistent practices R – 7 by firstly documenting a set of agreed processes for the teaching of literacy and engaging fully with the North Adelaide Region’s Priority for improving student comprehension.

**Literacy and Numeracy Data**

As indicated in the following table, we have generally continued to perform highly in most aspects of Literacy.
80% of Year 5 students and 79% of Year 7 students made medium to high progress from their previous test 2 years ago.

Where can we improve?

- Our next step is to develop greater consistency across the school in relation to literacy practices to ensure that classroom programs and intervention strategies work to reinforce each other’s effectiveness.
- We are also engaging with the Regional focus on improving comprehension skills.

NUMERACY STANDARDS MAINTAINED

As with Literacy, it is always a priority to improve student’s numeracy outcomes. The following table indicates we have generally continued to perform reasonably well in numeracy.

89% of Year 5 students and 82% of Year 7 students made medium to high levels of progress from their previous test two years ago.

Further action

- Analyse areas of weaker performance for Year 5 and 7 students and ensure that issues are addressed.
- Target resources at students with higher needs.
- Challenge our students to achieve highly.

ATTENDANCE

Our average annual attendance rates continue to be consistently higher than those of District or State averages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
<td>94.9%</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our focus for the last few years has been to reduce our rate of unexplained absences.

Whilst we have overall been successful in achieving a significant reduction from 18.4% in 2004 to 9.7% in 2007, we saw an increase in 2008 to 12.9%. In 2009 we saw a dramatic decrease to 9.5%.

ENROLMENT TRENDS

Based on term 3 numbers our enrolment trend is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>583</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>487</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The decline in enrolments is mainly due to demographics of the community. More than 90% of kindergarten enrolments attend our school.

There are less Year 5 and 6 students leaving our school for private schools.

We have continued to provide Principal’s Tours of the school once per term. Attendance at these has significantly increased.

The school’s website has been updated and more information is now available to parents about policies, programs and events.

Ardtornish remains a school of choice for many of our students living outside our zone. New enrolments often state that it’s the diversity of programs offered as the reason for choosing our school.
Further Action

- Our Fundraising and Community Events Portfolio (FACE) will take on an increased role in promoting the school and developing a stronger sense of community.

- The Education Portfolio will also look at ways we can ensure the parent community is fully aware of the wealth of programs we run and how they can support their child to be successful.

- Continue with regular Principal’s Tours each term.

- Continue to enhance our website.

ADDITIONAL COMMONWEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Staff Attendance - The average staff attendance rate for 2009 was 95.95%.

Teaching Staff Retention Rate. 85.71% of permanent teaching staff continued on from 2008 into 2009.

Teacher Qualifications - All teaching staff are registered teachers with at least the minimum qualification of a Diploma in Teaching. A number of staff have additional tertiary qualifications.

Staff Learning Expenditure

Most teaching staff completed the minimum requirement of 37.5 hours of professional development in their own time.

Staff meetings and Pupil Free Days were focused on staff learning.

Most staff attended conferences during school time.

$ 42,500 including grant money was allocated to support teachers’ learning.

Finances

The school remained in a sound financial position throughout 2009 with strong reserves. In 2010 these reserves will be called upon to top up short falls in funding from the BER projects as a result of making a commitment to build both a hall and a new library.

CONCLUSION

Parent support for our wide ranging programs continues to be a wonderful feature of our school and 2009 was a year that finished on a highnote as work began on our new buildings and a new Principal completed the first term of his tenure.

2010 will be a pivotal year for the development of our school’s facilities and we are excited about the changes we are about to undertake in what will be our 30th year of operation. We will have much to celebrate.

Mark Hansen
Principal

Cherie Thomson
Governing Council Chairperson