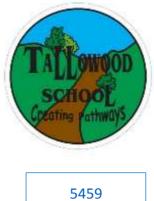


TALLOWOOD SCHOOL **Annual Report**









Introduction

The Annual Report for 2015 is provided to the community of Tallowood School as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.

Caroline Robson Principal

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Message from the Principal

This report provides an overview of our 2015 key achievements in year 1 of our current three year school plan (2015-2017). Our Tallowood School staff provide a supportive and engaging school environment and strive to provide quality education experiences for our students. Reflection on our practices is ongoing as we continually strive for improvement. We have identified the need for ongoing tracking systems and qualitative consistent assessment on our students' learning. Our strategic directions focus on our students being engaged learners with a 'voice', our staff being high performing and student focused and our community being engaged and informed.

Tallowood School continues to be well supported by our generous Hills community. Our wonderful supporters include Castle Hill RSL and their annual Rattle n Hum event, Christmas in The Hills community event, Castle Hill Baptist Church and The Centenary of ANZAC Hills Community, volunteers from The Men's Shed and Red Cross, Mirvac (Stanhope Village Shopping Centre), The Hills Shire Council, Gavin Syme (hubcap maker extraordinaire) and our Tallowood School P&C and student family and friends.

School background

School vision statement

'Creating Pathways for Life'

Our school is committed to each student achieving maximum independence and engagement for their post school life in their communication abilities, emotional well- being and respect for self and others.

School context

Tallowood School is a Public, Private Partnership SSP School (School for Specific Purpose) located in Kellyville. The school enrols students from Kindergarten to year 12. The current enrolment is 98 students. All students have a moderate or severe intellectual disability and many students have additional physical and sensory disabilities, autism or other syndromes. The school population is drawn from seven local council areas including The Hills, Holroyd, Parramatta, Blacktown, Penrith, Hawkesbury and Hornsby. The school opened in 2004 and is purpose built with a range of facilities. It provides a safe, attractive and caring learning environment for our students. Every student has a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP/IEP), designed in collaboration with families and carers, to identify specific learning priorities for each student. Our skilled staff use a holistic approach to differentiate the Board of Studies NSW Australian Curriculum in the key learning areas to meet the individual learning needs of our students. Our school has a range of innovative programs including work experience, hydrotherapy, Riding for the Disabled (RDA), sailing, Zumba classes, Tallowood farm and community access programs. The school is generously supported by The Hills community.

Self-assessment and school achievements

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, our school achievements and the next steps to be pursued. The Framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the elements of the School Excellence Framework.

During 2015 all staff were provided with professional learning during staff development days and professional learning afternoons around the Schools Excellence Framework and how this self-assessment process will provide direction for future planning for Tallowood School.

The school's current performance in each of the elements and domains was assessed and evidence noted to support this determination. The current level has been determined as follows.

Learning Culture: Sustaining and Growing

There is demonstrated commitment within the school community to strengthen and deliver on school learning priorities.

Positive, respectful relationships are evident among students and staff, promoting student wellbeing and ensuring good conditions for student learning.

Well-developed and current policies, programs and processes identify, address and monitor student learning needs.

Well-being: Sustaining and Growing

The school consistently implements a whole-school approach to wellbeing that has clearly defined behavioural expectations and creates a positive teaching and learning environment.

Quality teaching and professional practice are evident in every learning environment, providing students with opportunities to connect, succeed and thrive that are relevant to their stages of learning and development.

Curriculum and learning: Sustaining and Growing

Curriculum provision is enhanced by learning alliances with other schools and organisations.

 $The school \,actively \,collects \,and \,uses \,information \,to \,support \,students' \,successful \,transitions.$

Teachers involve students and parents in planning to support students as they progress through the stages of education.

There are systematic policies, programs and processes to identify and address student learning needs.

Assessment and reporting: Delivering

Individual student reports include descriptions of the student's strengths and areas of growth.

Teachers set transparent criteria for student assessment and have in place principles of consistent assessment and moderation.

Parents are updated on the progress of their children.

Effective Classroom Practices: Delivering

Teachers regularly review and revise teaching and learning programs.

Teachers routinely review previous content and preview the learning planned for students in class. All classrooms are well managed, with well-planned teaching taking place, so that students can engage in learning productively, with minimal disruption.

Data Skills and Use: Delivering

Teachers analyse and use student assessment data to understand the learning needs of students.

The school's professional learning builds teacher skills in the analysis, interpretation and use of student performance data.

Data analysis informs the school's learning goals and monitors progress towards them.

Collaborative Practice: Delivering

Teachers work together to improve teaching and learning in their year groups, stages, faculties, or for particular student groups.

Teachers provide and receive planned constructive feedback from peers, school leaders and students to improve teaching practice.

Processes are in place to provide formal mentoring or coaching support to improve teaching and leadership practice. The school identifies expertise within its staff and draws on this to further develop its professional community.

Learning and Development: Delivering

Teachers participate in professional learning targeted to school priorities and their professional needs.

The school has processes in place for teachers' performance and development.

Beginning and early-career teachers are provided with targeted support in areas of identified need.

Professional Standards: Delivering

Teachers understand and implement professional standards and curriculum requirements. Staff attainment of professional learning goals and teaching requirements are part of the school's performance and development processes.

The school has a culture of supporting teachers to pursue higher-level accreditation.

Teachers are committed to their ongoing development as members of the teaching profession.

Leadership: Sustaining and Growing

The school solicits and addresses feedback on school performance.

Leadership development is central to school capacity building.

The school has productive relationships with external agencies such as universities, business, industry and community organisations to improve educational opportunities for students.

School Planning, Implementation and Reporting: Delivering

Staff, students, parents and the broader school community are welcomed and engaged, when possible, in the development of the vision, values and purpose for the school.

The three-year school plan has annual iterations focused on achieving identified improvements.

The school articulates a commitment to equity and high expectations for learning for each student and is responsive to changing needs.

The school plan aligns to local and system priorities and ensures responsiveness to emerging needs. Planning and implementation includes processes for resource allocation, professional learning, performance monitoring and reporting.

The school acknowledges and celebrates a wide diversity of student, staff and community achievements.

School Resources: Delivering

School staffing ensures that full curriculum implementation and delivery requirements are met.

Systematic annual staff performance and development reviews are conducted.

The school's financial and physical resources and facilities are well maintained, within the constraints of the school budget, and provide a safe environment that supports learning.

School and other facilities are used creatively to meet a broad range of student learning interests and needs.

Management Practices and Processes: Delivering

The school leadership team communicates clearly about school priorities and practices.

Administrative practices effectively support school operations and the teaching and learning activity of the school.

Accountability practices are tied to school development and include open reporting to the community.

The school leadership team creates an organisational structure that enables management systems, structures and processes to work effectively and in line with legislative requirements and obligations.

All school staff are supported to develop skills for the successful operation of administrative systems.

Our self-assessment process will further assist the school to refine the strategic priorities in our School plan leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

Strategic Direction 1

Each student will be an engaged and successful learner with a voice.

Purpose

To develop a collaborative and supportive learning environment that has high expectations for our students' learning and meets their individual needs and abilities and celebrates their achievements and successes.

Overall summary of progress

In 2015 every student had a minimum of one communication goal for 2015 in their personalised learning plan. Supervisors monitored teacher's implementation of the goal and record of progress towards this goal. Student were reassessed in November and December 2015 using the online 'communication matrix'. A copy of the 2014 and 2015 assessments were compared and stored in each student's individual assessment folder. The 2015 assessment will be used to determine each student's communication goal for 2016.

To further assist students communication key word signing was encouraged by staff. Through professional learning afternoons staff increased their knowledge of key word signs and how to expand their knowledge of signing through the use of the online Auslan Sign Bank. This has enabled staff to improve their knowledge and practice of key word signing with students to aid their communication.

The establishment of assessment folders for each student has enabled teachers to record and store all student assessments in one easily accessible location. This folder will enhance teacher's ability to use a continuum approach to programing for students.

Through ESES funding a Behaviour Management Tool was developed and implemented throughout the school and wider education community. The use of this tool was presented at the SEPLA conference 2015 and made available to all staff within the Department of Education. This tool has enabled staff to identify the purpose of student's behaviours and provided them with suggestions as to how to support student's behaviour.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	<\$>
25% of students achieve an incremental step as recorded in the communication matrix.	During 2015, the communication team supported staff in the use of the 'communication matrix' to inform the development of an individual communication goal for every student. In December every teacher rated each student's progress	\$200 (KLA English funds)

25% of staff independently access and implement the resource package to support learners with complex needs.	towards these goals and the results indicated that 47% of communication goals were achieved by students. Of the remaining 53% of communication goals, staff indicated that 72% of goals were being achieved at a score greater than 50%. The communication team also encouraged the use of key word signing to support students' communication. During 2015 a number of professional learning afternoons were held to coach staff and practice the use of key word signing. The communication team also established an assessment folder where students' assessments from the previous three years can be recorded and this information will then assist teachers to developed engaging and valuable programs for the students. A committee was formed and the school community was consulted to determine an area of need. The Behaviour Support Toolkit was developed to support staff to collect data and plan interventions for students with behaviour difficulties. The committee gathered resources to be used in an online tool available for access to all staff. The services of a website designer were then engaged to construct the package. Once complete the package was trialled before being released at the SEPLA Special Education Annual Conference. Following the release staff were asked to participate in an online survey to determine the effectiveness of the package. 100% of participants responded that the package was easy to use and that the behaviours were relevant to their settings. 90%	Funding allocation: \$40 300 Staffing: \$34 127.29 Launch: \$2 818.18 Printing: \$20 Website: \$3 265
	responded that the resources were useful and 93% that the toolkit saved them time when conducting a functional behaviour assessment. 100% of participants responded that they would use the toolkit again. An online forum was added to the website after evaluation of the feedback. The forum allows staff from all settings to exchange ideas and provide ongoing support to each other.	
	This year Positive Behaviour for Learning practices were reviewed and staff received professional learning to support improvement. A graphic designer was employed to design a mascot for use on our signage. Stamps were purchased to be used by staff on playground duty to reward students for positive behaviours. The PBL team created and trialled a data base to collate data on inappropriate behaviour. This data is used to plan interventions and improve teaching practices as well as to prevent inappropriate behaviours from occurring in the future where possible. Parent information sessions were also conducted to improve understanding of PBL and consistent application across the school community.	Funding: Resources \$1189.44 Graphic designer \$100

Next steps

Future directions in 2016 will include the following:

- Differentiating between receptive and expressive communication goals in the assessment folder.
- Processes for tracking student progress on matrix assessment?
- Communication dictionary research and development of effective dictionaries
- Key Word Signing increasing student and staff skills in keyword signing.
- Student physical well-being (ANU project iPlay)
- Dance workshops

Strategic Direction 2

Our staff will be high performing and student needs focused.

Purpose

To develop staff skills and capacities in providing quality teaching and learning programs to raise the level of student achievement.

Overall summary of progress

In 2015 all temporary and permanent staff, as well as 1 casual teacher developed a Personal Development Plan in line with the Department of Education's Professional Development Framework.

Professional learning sessions were held to support staff through this new initiative. Classroom teachers were supported and monitored in the development, implementation and reflection of their individual plans by their supervisors.

Teaching staff's professional development goals included improving their knowledge of curriculum, accreditation, behaviour management, communication and literacy, teaching and learning activities appropriate to individual student's learning styles and assessment of student achievement. They also focused on participating in and coordinating whole school initiatives, developing leadership skills and collaborating with networks outside the school. Through these professional development goals, staff's knowledge of students, curriculum and collaboration within the school has enabled the provision of an engaging and challenging school environment for all students.

Each year teachers, in collaboration with parents and carers develop 3 – 5 personalised learning goals for each student in their class. These goals reflect the students learning needs additional to the NSW Board of Studies curriculum. Each student has a minimum of one communication goal and other goals reflect personal care and life skill goals which enable the students to increase their independence. In 2015 87% of students achieved their personalised goals with greater than 50% accuracy.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	<\$>
100% of permanent and temporary staff are meeting the requirements of the Professional	All temporary and permanent staff, as well as 1 casual teacher developed a Personal Development Plan in line with the Department of Education's Professional Development Framework. Across all teaching staff 57 professional development	\$18,000 for additional executive support days to support staff in this process.

Development Framework	goals were set. Of those staff surveys indicated that 44 (78%) of those goals were achieved and 13 (22%) were partially achieved. Of those partially achieved staff reported that they achieved between 50% and 80% of their goal.	
Assessment and tracking shows student achievement in 80% of Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) goals.	Each year personalised learning plans (PLPs) are developed in collaboration with parents and carers for each student. Survey results from staff indicate that overall in 2015 47% individual goals were achieved. Of the 53% of goals indicated not yet achieved 76% were achieving at great than 50% with 47% achieving at a score of 8 -10. Overall 87% of students achieved their personalised goals with greater than 50% accuracy	Nil

Next steps

Future directions in 2016 will include the following:

* Developing staff skills and confidence in the observation and feedback process to create opportunities for improvement in current teacher practice as identified by each individual staff member.

- * Investigating requirements for higher levels of accreditation.
- * Developing a strong and comprehensive induction package
- * Reviewing of current school policies eg student well-being policy.
- * Continued leadership opportunities for staff.
- * Professional learning opportunities through the iPlay program (Australian Catholic University).
- * New units of work developed for the new Geography and History syllabi.
- * Trialling of the SWANS Assessment Program(Students with additional learning needs)

Our community is engaged and informed.

Purpose

To develop partnerships which are connected and effective.

To develop productive networks which support student, staff and family well-being.

Overall summary of progress

A parent survey in 2014 showed that parents would like to receive more information about the school, activities within the school and their child's program. As a result in 2015 the school website was upgraded and maintained regularly and plans were made for a Tallowood School Facebook page and an app to enable the school to communicate with parents promptly about events occurring within the school. Use of the website was monitored showing an increase in access. This increase in access was also shown in a parent survey where parents indicated that they were pleased with the information provided.

As well parents were provided with the opportunity to attend information sessions around the introduction of the NDIS and the school's Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) program. These sessions were well attended and parents responded positively to the information provided by Tallowood and outside staff.

Staff well-being has been the focus of 2015. Staff have been led through a number of modules from the Mind Matters framework as planned. These were very well received. An after school exercise initiative (Pilates) has also been implemented for staff and this has continued from term 2 onwards. Staff also participated in a variety of activities during 'well-being' week each term. These included staff nights out, a buddy program and staff breakfast or morning tea. During early December staff were surveyed using an adaption of a 2014 survey conducted by the PBL committee. This survey showed a majority (all except 1 respondent) of staff felt valued within the school community and as a part of their classroom and immediate environment. The survey provided some valuable future directions not only in terms of staff well-being but also about ways of extending the Mind Matters concepts and framework to focus on student well-being.

Progress towards achiev	Resources (annual)	
Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	<\$>
Parent surveys indicate a 10% increase in levels of effective communication between school and home	The Tallowood School website was redeveloped using the schools website program. Co-authors and administrators for the site were trained. The website was monitored on a weekly basis and updated with photos and events each month. The <i>Caring for Families</i> section was developed to include links to services and training programs. The calendar was updated on a weekly basis to inform parents of upcoming events. Parental survey results indicated a 25% increase in parents accessing the school's website.	Nil
	The development of a Tallowood Facebook page was begun. Facebook rules of engagements were established and distributed to parents; student participation on Facebook was requested from parents and collated. Information from other schools was sought as to how they managed their pages. The Facebook page will go live in early 2016. At the end of	

	 2015 83% of parents had responded to participation and rules of engagement permissions. It was decided to use the tiqbiz app to connect with parents. This will be accessible once the Facebook page is operating. Parents were provided with information, via email, relating to courses or opportunities for their children as this information became available. School events were promoted through the use of email as required. Three parent information sessions have been held during terms 3 and 4. Two related to the NDIS and one related to Positive Behaviour for Learning. The first NDIS sessions provided parents with information about what the NDIS is, how it will impact upon them and the second guided them through developing a plan for their child. The PBL session provided parents with information as to what PBL is, how it is used at Tallowood and how they can use it at home. 	
Staff surveys reflect a 20% increase in the feelings of being valued and acknowledged.	A number of professional learning activities were implemented from the Mind Matters module and were well attended by staff. Staff well-being initiatives were also implemented including 'well-being' week. In December 2014 17% of staff stated that they didn't always feel valued within their classroom and immediate school environment. 55% of staff stated in 2014 that they didn't always feel valued as part of the school community. Surveys in December 2015 indicated that 95% of staff feels valued within the school community and as part of their classroom and immediate school environment. 50% of staff admitted that there was a time when they felt differently about this. Staff well-being is supported and staff will feel valued and acknowledged.	Resources \$150

Next steps

*The Facebook page and tiqbiz app will be accessible for parents, carers and the community to use.

*A parent survey will be conducted to ascertain their evaluation of the effectiveness of communication between home and school.

- * Further parent information sessions have been planned and will be conducted in 2016.
- * Fostering the formation of a parent support group- Parent and Carers at Tallowood School (PACT)
- * Developing effective procedures for therapy services for our students as part of the NDIA implementation.

Key initiatives (annual)	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
Aboriginal background funding To support students who come from an Aboriginal background to engage and participate in programs	In 2015 this funding was used to support 2 Aboriginal students in participation in school activities. This funding was used to support the attendance of two students with extreme high support needs. The success of this support was a great increase in attendance for both students.	\$2141
English language proficiency funding To improve student's everyday literacy and communication skills through implementation of the Reading Our Way reading scheme, participate in the Premier's Reading Challenge and to develop Literacy Activity Packs based on themed topics.	In 2015 Reading Our Way was implemented with an identified cohort of across the school. All teachers and students participated in the Premiers Reading Challenge over terms 2 and 3 and all students received official challenge completion certificates. Release from Face to Face teachers conducted a literacy program with all students based on themed activities using a variety of big books held in the library. Feedback from student improvement was very positive.	\$9200
Socio-economic funding To enable all students the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities.	In 2015 this funding was used to support student participation in extracurricular activities such as school spectacular and a dance showcase with a number of other SSPs and support classes.	\$5472
Support for beginning teachers To enable beginning teacher to increase their skills in the classroom.	In 2015 beginning teachers used their funds to plan and report on student's achievements, attend professional learning courses about autism, behaviour management and communication, purchase teaching resources and developing their skills through observing other classrooms and settings.	\$19938

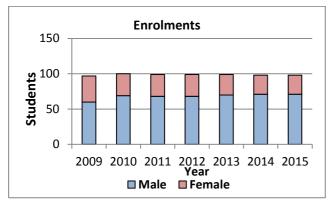
Student Information

Gender	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Male	60	69	68	68	70	71	71
Female	37	31	31	31	29	27	27

School attendance profile

Full school attendance is encouraged for all students. A number of students have had high rates of absences either with hospital admittance or ongoing medical issues.

Student enrolment profile



Post-school destinations

	Year 10 %	Year 11 %	Year 12 %
Open employment	0	0	1
Post School Option Program- community participation	0	0	5

Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

One year 12 student participated in a vocational education program, on a weekly basis, in two supported employment services.

Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification

Six year 12 students were awarded their Higher School Certificate (Life Skills).

Workforce information

Teacher qualifications

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

Qualifications	% of teacher staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100%
Postgraduate degree	51%

Workforce composition

Position	Number
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	4
Classroom Teacher(s)	12
SSP Teacher RFF	1.428
Teacher Librarian	0.6
Teacher of ESL	0
School Counsellor	0.2
School Administrative & Support Staff	2.282
School Learning Support Officers	16
General Assistant	1
Total	39.51

The Australian Education Regulation, 2014 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce.

In 2015 two staff members identified as being indigenous staff.

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Professional Learning at Tallowood School in 2015 developed the capabilities of teachers to provide engaging, authentic learning programs for students, based on current best practice.

Total allocation: \$13365.08

Total expended: \$13365.08

Average expenditure per teacher was \$703.42

Professional Learning funds were expended as shown in the table below:

Area	Amount
ICT for teacher learning	\$735.00
Literacy & numeracy	\$514.05
Quality teaching	\$3021.13
Syllabus implementation	\$6510.80
Career development	\$1634.10
Welfare & equity	\$950.00

Weekly professional learning afternoons were attended by all teachers and included training in Keyword Signing, writing risk assessments, school planning processes, Professional Development Framework, School Excellence Framework, wellbeing in the workplace and Reading Our Way.

School Development Days were attended by all staff, including School Learning Support Officers, and covered the following training:

Term 1

- Child Protection update
- Code of Conduct
- Mind Matters

Term 2

• Promoting skill development for students with an intellectual disability

Term 3

- Manual handling procedures
- School Excellence Framework
- Term 4
- CPR
- Non-violent Crisis Intervention

In 2015 four teachers were working towards accreditation at Proficient and five teachers were maintaining accreditation at Proficient. No teachers were seeking higher levels of accreditation.

Financial information

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

A full copy of the school's 2015 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the P&C. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

Date of financial summary	30/11/2015
Income	\$209256.92
Balance brought forward	209256.92
Global funds	241842.66
Tied funds	219998.98
School & community sources	218685.98
Interest	6153.20
Trust receipts	627.00
Canteen	0.00
Total income	896564.74
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	48519.71
Excursions	14427.81
Extracurricular dissections	42098.90
Library	3932.09
Training & development	13598.76
Tied funds	182147.81
Casual relief teachers	69981.79
Administration & office	111468.73
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	58326.25
Maintenance	58966.01
Trust accounts	1078.50
Capital programs	14904.80
Total expenditure	619451.16
Balance carried forward	277113.58

School performance

NAPLAN

5 students sat the NAPLAN tests. Their results were below the reportable threshold.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Each year schools are required to seek the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below.

Teachers:

Teachers were surveyed at the end of 2015 on how they rated the observation and feedback process that occurred during the year as part of the PDF implementation.

Staff were requested to rate using a scale of 1 - 10 where 0 was poor and 10 excellent.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	1	3	1	2	6	3	3	0	0

Staff will use the same rating at the end of 2016 to indicate success with 2016 processes. Targeted professional learning using the Classroom Teacher modules and mentoring should result in meaningful and improved practices.

Parents:

Parents were surveyed after each parent session.

NDIS session:

The results of the survey indicated that all survey respondents increased their level of understanding from either 'poor or fair' to 'good and very good'. 100% of survey respondents indicated that their knowledge of NDIS had been enhanced and they would like to attend future sessions.

PBL learning session:

The survey results indicated that 100% of respondents understanding of PBL had been enhanced, that they could identify the core values and how it is used within the school. Prior to the evening the parents understanding of PBL ranged from 70% fair, 20% good and 10% very good. Following the evening parents understanding of PBL ranged from 50% good and 50% very good.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

All of our students, including our Aboriginal students have a Personalized Learning Plan with identified

learning priorities, negotiated in consultation with their parents/ carers.

Aboriginal Language is the mandatory language for Stage 4 students.

Multicultural Education and Anti-racism

The school has a trained Anti-Racism Officer. In 2015 there were no issues for this officer to address.

Our school community celebrated Harmony Day with a multi- cultural performance and the sharing of an array of foods from many cultures.