Samuel Gilbert Public School
Annual School Report 2015
Introduction
The Annual Report for 2015 is provided to the school community of Samuel Gilbert Public School as an account of the school’s operations and achievements throughout the year.

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Ph: 9680 4477

Message from the Principal
The 2015 school year started with many new beginnings, new principal, new families, new learners from a diversity of backgrounds, new shared vision and a new plan for learning. 2015 has been a year of change as all excellent schools do not remain static. Samuel Gilbert Public School embraced many new educational reforms and focused on the changing educational landscape of current research and thinking.

The goals of the Melbourne Declaration provide a clear sense of purpose for all Australian schools and set the direction for schooling in the future:

- Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence
- Goal 2: All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens. MCEECDYA (2010)

Student learning is Samuel Gilbert Public School’s passion and purpose! It is our collective agenda, our core business and our shared joy. Our school provides outstanding learning opportunities for students to excel, enjoy and experience. The school promotes the success of every student and our school plan maps this support through quality teaching and learning, inclusive wellbeing practices and effective partnerships and current reform processes. The students of Samuel Gilbert Public School are amazing individuals; they display a keen attitude to learning and genuine care for each other. Our students are our joy and certainly have the most wonderful happy smiles!

Students at Samuel Gilbert Public School are fortunate to have dedicated teachers who provide so much of their time and energy to giving students a vast range of opportunities. This school is truly a very busy school! Students are provided with a huge range of opportunities to engage in. The teaching staff are also committed to providing quality teaching and learning programs. This is evident in their commitment to professional learning, collaborative planning and research based approaches. This year the team have spent considerable time refreshing their knowledge and skills on understanding learning progressions, the skills of 21 Century learning and the importance of developing students’ growth mindsets.

The support of the community for our school has been a key factor in our successful year. Our parents and carers encourage and support the opportunities this school can provide for students. The generous financial support our P&C and school community provides enables the school to supply our students with valuable resources. We look forward to continuing to foster positive relationships and partnerships in learning next year.

This report reflects the achievements of the school which are a direct result of the hard work and success of the students, the commitment and professionalism of its teaching and support
staff and the involvement of an active, dedicated and generous parent community. I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school’s achievements and areas of development.

Mrs Ros McCallan  
Principal

School background

School vision statement

“To promote the success of every student through quality teaching and inspired learning, underpinned by inclusive wellbeing practices.”

School context

Samuel Gilbert Public School is situated in the Hills District, nestled in the stunning, leafy surrounds of Castle Hill. The school opened in 1986 and since then the school has grown rapidly to its present size of around 700 students. Students from language backgrounds other than English form approximately 35% of the school population. Over 42 cultural groups are represented with the main language groups being Mandarin, Korean, Urdu and Hindi.

The school is named after a convict settler who arrived in 1816. In 1831 Samuel Gilbert was given a conditional pardon and granted land at Castle Hill. This grant borders the land on which our school stands. The school is set on beautiful grounds, with natural bushland and plentiful outside spaces.

The school has a strong relationship with the community which fosters active participation by the parents within the school. The P&C support the school with a number of initiatives to provide additional resources for the students.

Quality teaching and learning is the key priority for the school. Students engage in a rich diversity of programs and enrichment opportunities. The school sets high expectations and promotes the success of every student. The school prides itself on offering a broad and balanced curriculum.
Self-assessment and school achievements

This year our school has discussed the School Excellence Framework and its relationship to our school improvement journey. The intent and the language of the School Excellence Framework is strongly embedded in our school plan. All staff were engaged in the development of our school plan and this determined the elements of the framework most relevant for our progress towards excellence. Staff have also reflected on the progress being made across the school and have helped identify the goals and initiatives for our next steps in 2016. These are our enhancement of high expectations, quality teaching and more positive wellbeing initiatives to improve student achievement.

In the domain of Learning, our efforts have largely focused on wellbeing; the importance of relationships and growth mindsets. Our school has devoted much time in exploring current thinking and research on creating positive and productive learning environments. The staff have made outstanding progress towards understanding the fundamentals of wellbeing by building a collective view of collaboration, respect and the importance of raising positive recognition for improved student engagement.

Parents, staff and students were asked to give 6 words to describe what wellbeing means to them. The larger the word in the wordle, the greater the number of participants who gave that answer.

The school was most interested in seeking the opinions of teachers, students and parents/carers on wellbeing. Wellbeing is a significant area for SGPS, it is the essence of our second strategic direction. The school wanted to gauge a deeper understanding of ‘what wellbeing meant’ to our key stakeholders. The responses are presented above in hands; the hands are metaphors for our work in progress.

The main message from teachers is ‘understanding’, with most responses focused on social engagement and relationships. Student responses focused more on health and active participation, whereas for parents/carers the focus was physical safety. In 2016 the school plans to introduce Kids Matters to deepen its understanding of wellbeing at SGPS and strategies to support a stronger culture of collective partnership and positive mental health.

In this domain we have also engaged in developing an understanding of 21st Century learning skills and their importance in creating high student engagement, relevance and curiosity in learning. Our pilot critical and creative learning project in 2015 has been a significant success.
and this evidence-based initiative will be further developed and expanded across the school’s collective work in 2016.

Under the domain of Teaching, attention to individual learning needs and differentiated learning has also been a major focus within our directions. We have successfully introduced and increased the data and tools teachers use to provide a deeper picture of our students’ learning profiles. Staff have engaged in collaborative professional learning to enhance quality lesson design, planning and teaching. Focus has been on increasing our knowledge of individual student growth, point of instruction need and their learning progression- every child matters. As a result we have restructured our learning support practices and many units of learning. In 2016 we will restructure and focus on our practices in enrichment.

In the domain of Leading, our energies in 2015 have been to align management processes and practices to effectively support student centred decision making. Student learning is at the heart of all resource, financial and communication management. This has resulted in 2015 being a year of review across the school and the development of strategies to nurture change, quality-learning approaches, structures and leadership development. A strong foundation of our approach to leadership development has been the empowerment of distributed leadership teams to undertake the substantial amount of work schools of this size and complexity require. We have spent time in identifying the wealth of expertise, capabilities and professional passions within the staff. In 2015 the school also very positively introduced a leadership learning forum. This was a series of conversational sessions where teachers from any level of experience or expertise could learn together from research based models of best leadership practice and self-reflect on their growth pathway.

The new approach to school strategic planning, supported by the new funding model, is making a difference to our school. 2015 has been a year of identification, initiating change management, learning and positive steps. It has been a year of creating relationships, expectations and evolving. As we build upon and nurture the learning from 2015, we embark on an exciting pathway to create a dynamic school culture of continuous improvement in the delivery of education excellence to our students.
Strategic Direction 1

To provide every student with quality learning and teaching that is embedded in curriculum, assessment and teacher practice.

Purpose

Enhancing teacher practice and programs for effective learning through:

- The Quality Teaching Framework and the application for higher order thinking skills
- Curriculum delivery that is clearly linked to syllabus requirements.
- Implementation of new Australian curriculum syllabus (maths, science & technology and history)
- Implementation of the Literacy & Numeracy continuums
- Use of PLAN software
- Extended and enhanced collaborations/educational networks

Overall summary of progress

Naplan results for 2015 show good growth in the areas of reading and writing with 66% of students showing expected growth rates. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are the key factors to this success and are the school’s strength areas. Reading and writing continue to be areas for improvement, with vocabulary and comprehension the main aspects for future growth. Numeracy results in 2015 achieved a 53% growth rate. Analysis of our numeracy progress shows a clear correlation with our reading and writing progress. That is, the main area for improvement is the aspect of problem solving skills in our numeracy results. Our students are very strong at pure operational tasks but the application of different strategies to complex problems is an aspect of future development. These results and areas for future improvement will guide the school reviewing different approaches to enrichment and supporting our more capable students.

After a diligent year of professional learning for teachers using the literacy continuum, all classes now have individualised data for students to guide differentiation in their teaching and learning activities. The invaluable use of this approach enables all teachers to have a common marker of success, monitor and track a student’s learning profile against key aspects of literacy development and scaffold their next steps in achieving. In 2016 the school will use the progress students make on the continuum in their reporting to parents, as we make deliberate steps to further engage with parents as partners in learning in our approach to individualised learning growth.

This year the school introduced a range of whole school measures as a systemic approach to monitoring and tracking individual learning progression. For example, the PAT assessments were introduced later in the year after a series of professional learning exercises. Teachers are becoming more confident in the use of this measure to assist them with differentiation in classroom activities. The school continues to work towards our high expectations of 96% of students achieving or exceeding age level results.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)</th>
<th>Progress achieved this year</th>
<th>Resources (annual)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naplan-Reading and writing</td>
<td>66% expected growth</td>
<td>Numerous hours and Staff development days devoted to a sustained focused on professional learning in literacy development and literacy continuum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naplan-Numeracy</td>
<td>53% expected growth</td>
<td>$9,000 to audit and commence an upgrade of resources. $15,000 for professional learning time to implement new syllabus and TEN training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit levels- for K-2 students</td>
<td>80% achieved</td>
<td>$20,000 for upgrade of reading materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAT assessments</td>
<td>80% achieved</td>
<td>Numerous hours and Staff development days devoted to a sustained focused on professional learning in literacy development and literacy continuum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next steps

The school is immensely proud of the hard work teachers have shown in 2015. It has been a year of putting into place rigorous professional learning and establishing multiple whole school approaches to develop a clear, consistent and evidence-based understanding of our learners. Many of our approaches are new learning for staff and 2015 was a year of introduction and time to develop confidence. What has been clear from our data is that some of our old approaches needed to change. Problem solving, vocabulary and inferential comprehension have been continuous areas for growth, especially with our more able academic students. In 2016 the school will re-structure how these areas are catered for, what explicit teaching strategies will be employed, the anchors to syllabus outcomes, class formations and enhancement of our learning engagement with GATS networks and other professional collaborations.
Strategic Direction 2

To provide an engaged learning approach that enhances every student capabilities and nurtures their development as successful global citizens.

Purpose

Learning is organised to foster the development of character through shared practices that strengthen:

- Student focus with the integration of ACARA’s social and emotional competences in curriculum delivery
- Student support with the implementation of differentiated units of learning, the use of PLASST tool and specialist strategies where appropriate
- Student voice and confidence in high order learning conversations
- Student participation and leadership
- Wellbeing by developing positive relationships, and implementing restorative strategies.

Overall summary of progress

The school has made significant progress in this area in 2015. It has been essential for the staff as a team to establish a shared understanding of current thinking and research that addresses whole child holistic approaches to learning progressions that are reflective of our educational reforms. Our direction is to understand learning as an inclusive progress broader than a focus on a range of academic contexts.

Staff have gained a deep understanding of successful learners and the strong relationship between success and effort. Staff have developed growth mindset strategies within their classroom practice to enhance student resilience and positivity. Our school recognises the impact of intrapersonal and environmental factors on learning development, resulting in changes in our practices. Students are clearly articulated as being at the heart of all decision making. Our work in this area is focused on developing as we build our knowledge and skills in teaching and learning in response to the profile of the learner.

One notable change has been to re-design a new learning support structure and policy. Our learning support practices include strong leadership and collaborations by school executive and specialist staff. School funding is explicitly linked to supporting student needs through the RAM loadings. At Samuel Gilbert Public School Strategic Direction One and Strategic Direction Two have a symbiotic relationship with each other in our progress towards improved student learning outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)</th>
<th>Progress achieved this year</th>
<th>Resources (annual)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation and engagement strategies</td>
<td>Literacy continuum introduced and PLAN data established. Creative and creative project piloted TEN training introduced for K-2 classes</td>
<td>Teacher professional learning time and Staff development days. TEN training- teacher professional learning time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Education</td>
<td>Professional learning sessions and conferences. Learning Support team, referral and policy changes implemented. PLASST tool learning.</td>
<td>School professional learning funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from wellbeing surveys</td>
<td>Mapping data of student, parents and teacher wellbeing awareness</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMBR</td>
<td>Implementation delayed until 2016</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Next steps**

As we build upon and harness the insights of current thinking and research of effective wellbeing principles and practices, our concept of learning and support will grow as one collective concern, action and reflection. Our continuous dialogue on wellbeing is essential in the effective management of change and the provisions to support successful learners.

In 2016 there will be further refinement in our practices and processes; especially in areas such as awards to reflect individualised growth and effort and enrichment structures to nurture student voice and collaborations. We have also mapped more professional learning opportunities for staff in the area of critical and creative thinking. This will mean a continuation on our journey to embed teaching strategies for improved student engagement, to value diversity in thinking styles and our appreciation that success in learning can take multiple pathways and effort.
Strategic Direction 3

To build positive partnerships and establish effective processes to achieve school excellence.

Purpose

The school builds a positive and inclusive culture for learning through effective accountability structures that support:

- Resource management aimed to improve student learning outcomes
- Communication practices that promote student learning
- Professional learning to enhance teacher practice and leadership development
- Performance management for quality care and service
- Community engagement
- School improvement in all areas

Overall summary of progress

In 2015 the school worked very hard to articulate a strong message that student learning was its purpose and passion with current research based approaches integral in our quest to improve student outcomes. In an extremely busy and wonderful school that provides students with many opportunities, it is important that quality and diversity should also be our area of continual focus. Throughout 2015 our school constantly reflected on many programs, especially some of our more traditional ones. We discussed the relevance and rigour of how some programs or some approaches fit with our students’ profile, focusing on: have we been meeting their holistic needs, are we in line with current thinking, and our new reform agendas.

Staff have devoted time to engaging in current thinking and forming new collaborative networks. The result of these are evident in many of the changes or ‘next steps’ designed for 2016. For example, working with teachers from other local schools in 2015 in our critical and creative thinking project has been very positive; teachers have had opportunities to learn together, reflect, grow in their practice plus promote and share their expertise in quality teaching. Such professional collaborations have assisted teachers in the development of meaningful and relevant professional learning goals.

The school has also spent its energies this year in ensuring that school budgets, management practices, leadership development, community relationships and school structures continue to more closely support student learning and are in line with refreshed Departmental policy and guidelines, consistent with the new reform agendas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)</th>
<th>Progress achieved this year</th>
<th>Resources (annual)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership development</td>
<td>Leadership learning professional learning sessions facilitated by principal (weekly during term 2 and 3) – excellent attendance by staff.</td>
<td>School professional learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive teachers attending Professional learning events organised by Director, PS. Teachers attending professional learning events organised by ACEL. funds - $8,000.

Management structures Transitioning structures to reflect new reform agendas and committees. In-kind support of executive time.

**Next steps**

In 2016 our school will move onto a new operating platform for administrative and business management. This will be a great positive step for our school. However, it is a significant shift in our old practices. Considerable training, time, effort and support strategies will be required.

In 2016 our attentions will also focus on developing leadership opportunities for staff, through the leading teams and committees across the school. Teams and committees will be empowered with designing improvements for our school in line with the school plan and current thinking, providing professional growth for talented staff. The school is keen to adopt more sustainable and flexible thinking in its approach to improve excellence. This school has a significant portion of staff approaching retirement and is respectful of their expertise.

Another step for this school will be to enhance the opportunities we provide for our parents and carers. The school is keen to build a collective responsibility and partnership in improving outcomes for our students. It was very evident from feedback in 2015 that our community is excited and positive about our school’s directions. It is our passionate work in the areas of wellbeing, and critical and creative thinking that are most popular with our community. In 2016 the school is planning and looking forward to providing more parent and carer information sessions and sharing our educational journey.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key initiatives (annual)</th>
<th>Impact achieved this year</th>
<th>Resources (annual)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal background funding</td>
<td>Cultural literacy resources purchased</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This school did not receive any RAM funding for this area.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language proficiency funding</td>
<td>Literacy resources, additional teacher support, and classroom items such as signs, posters etc.</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted students support for refugees and new arrivals</td>
<td>Not applicable in 2015</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic funding</td>
<td>Improved classroom resourcing, and financial assistance for such item as uniforms for students, excursions etc.</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low level adjustment for disability funding</td>
<td>Physical support equipment such as stools, steps to access toilets and bubblers, jelly bean tables and social skills equipment. Additional counsellor time purchased to support families in need.</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for beginning teachers</td>
<td>Professional learning courses and mentor support time.</td>
<td>$17,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other school focus areas</th>
<th>Impact achieved this year</th>
<th>Resources (annual)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical and Creative Thinking Project</td>
<td>Academic partner support, professional learning sessions, and teacher release.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
<td>Professional learning courses, sessions and guest speakers</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student information

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

Student enrolment profile

Student attendance profile

Workforce information

Reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Workforce composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teacher(s)</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teacher(s)</td>
<td>24.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Reading Recovery</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Support Teacher(s)</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counsellor</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Australian Education Regulation, 2014 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce. In 2015, Samuel Gilbert Public School had no Aboriginal staff members.

Teacher qualifications

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate degree or diploma</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate degree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Financial information

Financial summary

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 parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary</th>
<th>30/11/2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>255,631.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>392,829.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>239,301.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>412,757.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>7,582.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>120,433.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>1,428,536.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Expenditure**

| Teaching & learning       |            |
| Key learning areas        | 115,980.50 |
| Excursions                | 81,227.83  |
| Extracurricular dissections | 209,183.80 |
| Library                   | 12,325.22  |
| Training & development    | 360.00     |
| Tied funds                | 242,187.69 |
| Casual relief teachers    | 127,373.36 |
| Administration & office   | 85,866.88  |
| School-operated canteen   | 0.00       |
| Utilities                 | 53,363.29  |
| Maintenance               | 36,004.22  |
| Trust accounts            | 117,824.21 |
| Capital programs          | 49,839.08  |
| Total expenditure         | 1,131,536.08 |
| Balance carried forward   | 297,000.91 |

School performance

NAPLAN

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3 and 5 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10. The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

NAPLAN - Literacy (including Reading, Writing, Spelling and Grammar and Punctuation)

NAPLAN Year 3 - LITERACY

One hundred and twelve Year 3 students completed the National Assessment in Literacy.

In 2015 69.6% of students were placed in the top two bands in Reading. This was above the state average of 50% and the Statistically Similar Groups of Schools, of 69%.

In 2015 74.7% of students were placed in the top two bands in Spelling. This was above the state average of 47.2% and the Statistically Similar Groups of Schools, of 62.8%.
In 2015 72.9% of students were placed in the top two bands in Grammar and Punctuation. This was above the state average of 52.5% and the Statistically Similar Groups of Schools, of 70.4%.

NAPLAN Year 5 – LITERACY

Eighty nine Year 5 students completed the National Assessment in Literacy.

In 2015 48.3% of students were placed in the top two bands in Reading. This was above the state average of 38% but below the Statistically Similar Groups of Schools, of 56.7%.

In 2015 62.1% of students were placed in the top two bands in Writing. This was above the state average of 54.5% and below the Statistically Similar Groups of Schools, of 67.3%.

In 2015 65.6% of students were placed in the top two bands in Spelling. This was above the state average of 39.9% and the Statistically Similar Groups of Schools, of 55.6%.
In 2015 55.5% of students were placed in the top two bands in Grammar and Punctuation. This was above the state average of 38.7% and below the Statistically Similar Groups of Schools, of 58.3%.

In 2015 32.2% of students were placed in the top two bands in Writing. This was above the state average of 21% and the Statistically Similar Groups of Schools, of 32%.

NAPLAN - Numeracy

NAPLAN Year 3 - Numeracy

One hundred and eleven Year 3 students completed the National Assessment in Numeracy.

In 2015 60.3% of students were placed in the top two bands. This was a decrease of 5.4% in comparison to the 2014 results. This was above the state average of 38.1% and the Statistically Similar Groups of Schools, of 55.4%.
NAPLAN Year 5 – Numeracy

Eighty eight Year 5 students completed the National Assessment in Numeracy. In 2015 40.9% of students were placed in the top two bands. This was a decrease of 1.5% in comparison to the 2014 results. This was above the state average of 30.7% but below the Statistically Similar Groups of Schools, of 46.8%.

Progress in Numeracy and Literacy between Year 3 and Year 5

In Reading the average growth of students was 74.3 points compared with 76.4 points for the State and 80.5 points for the Statistically Similar Group of Schools.

In Spelling the average growth of students was 77.0 points compared with 83.9 points for the State and 84.9 points for the Statistically Similar Group of Schools.

In Grammar and Punctuation the average growth of students was 60.5 compared with 71.2 points for the State and 77.6 points for the Statistically Similar Group of Schools.

In Writing the average growth of students was 60.5 points compared with 61.3 points for the State and 64.1 points for the Statistically Similar Group of Schools.

In Numeracy the average growth of students was 86.4 points compared with 94.1 points for the State and 96.1 points for the Statistically Similar Group of Schools.
Other Achievements

Art

Visual Arts

The implementation of visual arts within the classroom setting provides opportunities to promote self-esteem, self-discipline, cooperation, and self-motivation for all students regardless of ability levels. The integration of art within the learning environment enables the student to use this learning across all Key Learning Areas and enables students to express their individuality.

Operation Art

Samuel Gilbert Public School participated in Operation Art in 2015. Operation Art raises funds for the Westmead Children's Hospital. Each classroom teacher chose three outstanding art works created by students during regular classroom art lessons. The Creative Arts Committee judged the shortlisted entries and chose four winners from across the school to enter into Operation Art. The four winning artworks were professionally framed and exhibited at the Armory Gallery at Sydney Olympic Park with over 800 artworks from public school students all over NSW.

This year Samuel Gilbert Public School raised $450.00 for Westmead Children's Hospital.

A spectacular art display was created for the school fete. Every child in the school had a piece of art showcased.

Dance

Samuel Gilbert places a strong emphasis on our dance programs. All students participate in dance lessons with a specialist dance teacher and their own class teacher.

In addition to our school dance program, students had the opportunity to audition for the Boys Dance Group, Stage One, Two and Three Dance groups. Both boys and girls are encouraged to participate and audition for our dance groups. The dance groups rehearsed either during lunch time or one morning a week. They performed at many events and eisteddfods. All students were to be commended for their exceptional behaviour, commitment and collaboration.

Thank you to our dance teachers and groups for their commitment and hard work over the year.

Achievements for 2015 include:

- At the Hawkesbury Eisteddfod Stage 2 and 3 Dance groups placed 4th and Stage 1 and Boys Dance group received highly commended.
- Selected students were invited to participate in the Years 2 - 4 State Dance Workshops held at The Sydney Dance Company.
- All groups performed at the Hills Dance Spectacular.
- Stage 1 and Boys Dance group performed at the Hills Performing Arts Festival.
- All groups performed at Education Week Open Day, Grandparents Day, the school fete, a school assembly and at the end of year Presentation Assembly.
**Band**

The Band Program at Samuel Gilbert is available to all students in Year 3-6. It provides students with an opportunity to explore their love of music in a structured and supportive environment. Students are able to hire instruments for a nominal fee from the school and attend weekly band sessions and quarterly workshops.

In 2015 two band programs were run with children new to instrumental music entering a Training Band for one year and more experienced musicians performing in the Concert Band. There were approximately 55 students in each of these bands, necessitating a move to a three band program in 2016.

In 2015 achievements included:

- At the Hawkesbury Eisteddfod Training Band First third in C Grade and Concert Band placed second in A Grade.
- A successful two day Band Camp at Vision Valley where students enjoyed intensive band tuition and workshops, culminating in a concert for parents, the first public performance of the year.
- Concert Band performance for the residents of the Flinders Anglican Retirement Village.
- Training Band performance for the students of Karonga School.
- Performances at Open Day, Grandparents Day, School Fete and Presentation Day.
- Senior Band students joined Castle Hill High School for a whole day workshop and concert for parents.

**Chess**

Samuel Gilbert achieved excellent results in Chess this year with students from all grades learning strategies and techniques in an afternoon Chess Club.

This year two teams entered into the Knox Grammar Tournament and placed 36th out of over a hundred schools. Our teams who represented Samuel Gilbert were:

Team A: Andy L, Prash S, Kieran C.
Team B: Niven N, Anthony M, Addison W.

In Term 4 the Sydney Academy of Chess hosted the annual Samuel Gilbert Public School Tournament. It was a huge success with rising talent from many younger players. Andy L (Year 3) took out first place with a flawless winning streak, Anthony M (Year 3) placed second and Niven N (Year 5) placed third.

It was encouraging to see a number of Year 3 students playing some outstanding Chess against older competitors.

**Technology for learning**

Technology for learning at Samuel Gilbert Public School continued to develop and strengthen during 2015. Significant funds, time and energy were invested to enhance the learning experiences of students. There was a strong focus on:

- developing 21st century learning skills that cater for the new National Curriculum,
- creating professional learning opportunities for staff and
- updating the infrastructure and resources within the school.
We expanded our wireless school coverage throughout the school site to allow all students access to the DoE network when using iPads and netbooks.

The Technology Committee accomplished another phase of our device rollout, replacing desktop computers and printers and installing an Interactive Touchscreen TV in the computer room. The Touchscreen TV is a device that will allow for greater collaboration, engagement and interaction amongst our students.

Sport

Samuel Gilbert students have demonstrated a high skill level and excellent sportsmanship qualities throughout all sporting endeavours in 2015.

A variety of sporting activities, competitive and non-competitive, were made available to students across the student body. All students from Kindergarten through to Year 6 actively participated in weekly sports and PE programs. This year saw the introduction of the Sport in Schools program at Samuel Gilbert PS, providing all students with the opportunity to experience a variety of equipment and activities to enhance their sporting skills including gymnastics.

The dance program continued for all students from K-6.

The School Sport program targeted specific skills required for playing a variety of sports. Once again Tennis coaching was provided as an option to the non-competitive school sport program for Years 3 and 4.

Students from Samuel Gilbert have had the opportunity to participate in a variety of additional sporting activities: The Hills Swimming and Life Saving Club Swimming Carnival, Basketball and AFL clinics, the Parramatta Girls Rugby League Competition and the Rugby League Sevens Gala Day.

Students from Years 2 to 6 participated in the annual Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics Carnivals. Our carnival winners were:

- Swimming - Timburra
- Cross Country - Koonaka
- Athletics - Gundaroo

The champion house for 2015 was Timburra.

Team and individual sporting achievements include:

- Samuel Gilbert won the Zone Cross Country Carnival and was runner up at the Zone Swimming carnival.
- This year we entered a senior girls team into the Parramatta Girls Rugby League Competition.
- Both the Senior and Junior Rugby League teams participated in the Parramatta Championships. Our senior boys team were runners up.
- The following teams won their PSSA competition: Junior Boys T Ball, Senior Boys Rugby League, Senior Girls Touch Football.
- Twenty-one students were selected to represent Sydney West Area in a wide variety of sports. These included Swimming, Water Polo, Athletics, Cross Country, Soccer, Basketball, Softball, Rugby Union, Hockey and Touch Football.
Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

In 2015 the school surveyed parents seeking their opinions on various aspects of satisfaction with school life. 120 families replied to the survey and the results are detailed in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Agreed or Strongly agreed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The students are the school’s main concern.</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am proud of my child’s school.</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel welcome at my child’s school</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My child feels safe at school</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The school encourages new students and their families to be involved in school activities.</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The school encourages students to achieve their best.</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The school encourages everyone to learn.</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The school caters for the learning needs of all students.</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The school found these results very interesting. For each question item there were small percentages of ‘unsure’ responses. Most results were pleasing, showing strong positivity, with the exception of question 8. These results do triangulate well with the school’s own self assessments. The school has identified the need for a stronger focus on differentiated learning, especially for gifted and talented learners. The school’s strategic directions map a transforming approach incorporating current thinking and research based strategies. Some of the initiatives the school has introduced are: use of literacy continuum to track, monitor and plan lessons more explicitly to students’ point of instruction need, critical and creative thinking strategies for stronger engagement and strengthening conceptual based learning programs. In 2016 the school will continue to build further on these and other initiatives such as flexible structures for enrichment programs.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Through the implementation of Aboriginal perspectives across all curriculum areas we foster awareness and understanding of Aboriginal Australia and our Indigenous history and culture. We incorporate programs which are designed to educate students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and the significance of their histories and cultures.

In 2015 all grades recognised NAIDOC Day by immersing students in cultural activities including story telling, art activities and discussions and readings about contemporary Aboriginal issues.

Samuel Gilbert Public School is committed to providing quality Aboriginal education throughout the school.

Multicultural Education and Anti-racism

Samuel Gilbert Public School values the diversity of our students. With approximately 35% of students with language backgrounds other than English additional support is available to many of these students. The EALD programs are offered in a variety of ways to meet the differing needs to students as they gain mastery of the English language.

EALD teaching focuses on students learning English in the context of the curriculum, to assist in their development of English as relevant to the subject area.

The school celebrates Harmony Day each year to communicate the importance of cultural diversity and to encourage values and a sense of belonging amongst students.

Learning Support Team

The Samuel Gilbert Learning and Support Team meet each week to ensure that the needs of all students in the school are being met. A key focus of our L&S Team is the facilitation of collaborative planning between teachers, support staff, specialist personnel, parents and students. This ensures an ongoing plan is developed and
implemented to meet the needs of students with additional learning and support needs and the allocation of resources is prioritised appropriately.

The team considers the type and level of support required by students to best meet their academic, social and emotional needs. Continual monitoring and evaluation of students and programs is a critical aspect of the Learning and Support team process.

Key support personnel at SGPS are:

**The Learning and Support Teacher**

Samuel Gilbert Public School has a learning and support teacher. This role works collaboratively with classroom teachers to support students with additional educational needs. Through adjusted learning programs, differentiated lessons, direct instruction, regular monitoring and assessment the Learning and Support teacher assists students with specific learning needs achieve their learning goals. A focus this year has been training the K-2 staff in Targeting Early Numeracy (TEN). This is a program that focuses on supporting students who are experiencing difficulty in numeracy in the early years.

**Reading Recovery Teacher**

The Reading Recovery program targets students who have experienced difficulty with reading in their first year of school. Through the provision of individualised daily lessons with the Reading Recovery teacher, selected Year 1 students are given the opportunity to develop and consolidate their understanding of the reading process.

**The Multilit Program**

The Multilit program is designed to improve specific reading skills of students experiencing difficulty in primarily Years 2-4. With a focus on phonics (word attack skills), sight word recognition and reinforced regular reading the program assists students with weaknesses in these areas. The Multilit program operates four days per week. A trained tutor is funded by the P&C to administer the program.

**The Resource Teacher**

The Resource teacher is a school based position of four days per week. This provides support work in the area of enrichment and support for students with learning difficulties. The P&C generously funds the school for this support.

The enrichment program was provided to extend talented students. Small groups from Years 1 to 6 were withdrawn to work on problem solving skills or writing tasks.

**P&C President’s Message**

The P&C had a very productive year in 2015. The results below are reflective of a community who engage as partners to support the school to deliver a better education for our children.

**Investments**

The P&C continued its support of core school activities. A total of $84,000 was spent on library resources, an additional teacher, literacy resources and the Multi-lit program. In addition the P&C contributed nearly $30,000 for Mathletics, Year 6 farewell, oval upkeep, wireless cabling, a school app and toilet enhancements. $145,000 was set aside for a multipurpose building and $20,000 for school playground enhancements.

**Social**

A great aspect of the P&C is the many social events run for children, parents and families. It started with the Kindy BBQ and was followed this year by a movie night, trivia night, Father’s Day BBQ, mother daughter camp, carols and a gingerbread house decorating night.
This year the school and P&C successfully introduced the K-2 class parent role. It has provided opportunities for parents and carers to undertake social events, to become involved in school activities and for class parents to assist with communication in a large school setting.

Services

The P&C provides three services to school: canteen, uniform shop and bands. The uniform shop and canteen contribute funds that are re-invested into the school. The band committee offers a low cost band program for all children interested in music.

Fundraising

The P&C has an active fundraising program. This year the P&C undertook a chocolate drive, Election BBQ, Easter Raffle, Mother’s Day Stall, Fete, sold entertainment books and Christmas puddings. The efforts of the community resulted approximately $102,000 being raised. The P&C successfully secured a $30,000 grant from Ray Williams our State member and has sought a further $20,000 from Alex Hawke our federal member for the building project.

Communication

Facebook was introduced and an events calendar established to improve its communication with families. The P&C supported introduction of the E-news app and Volunteer Spot to facilitate family members’ volunteering.

Volunteer Recognition

The successes outlined above exist because of the many volunteer hours given freely by families. Volunteers are recognised and thanked for the work they undertake. This involves certificates, personal emails and the Facebook “Fete Heroes”. The P&C introduced the “Winner” award, an initiative where the community selects a member who is acknowledged for their contribution to the school.

Thank you to the families who all contribute and support the P&C and the school.

Jackie Coleman, P&C President