Our school at a glance

Bridge Road School, located in Camperdown in the Inner City of the Sydney Region, is an educational setting for young children with mental health disabilities.

Students

Following the referral procedures for Special Education placement within Sydney Region, thirty six students from Kindergarten to Year 4 enrolled in Bridge Road School in 2010. The school's focus is on early intervention. Many of the younger children have most complex and often differing categories of disabilities. The enrolment pattern varies as children enrol and exit the program throughout the year.

Staff

All teaching staff meets the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools. The Staff has a high degree of experience and expertise in and commitment to teaching children with mental health disabilities. All current members of staff form a most cohesive, stable, professional team whose varied qualifications and skills are most relevant in supporting the academic, social and behavioural needs of the children. The addition of specialist health professionals working part time at the school further supports student needs.

Significant programs and initiatives

The school is committed to supporting students to enable them to either establish a full enrolment pattern in their home schools or to access other appropriate specialist settings when they have completed their intervention. There are a number of significant programs to achieve these outcomes.

Student Welfare programs form the basic framework for the Bridge Road program to enhance student outcomes through assisting children to cope with a variety of situations in different environments. The bridge analogy is clearly understood by all students. Students are also aware from the commencement of their program that they will return to their home schools:

“We are a bridge children cross to learn to speak competently, think clearly and make informed choices. Within our school environment children learn skills to handle novel and complex situations.”

Significant programs include:

- teaching /learning programs
- behaviour management programs
- the integration program
- playground program
- fitness/sporting programs
- morning assemblies
- creative arts programs
- specialist therapeutic programs
- other specialist health interventions
The Creative Arts

The Creative Arts are strongly represented at the school so that the children can communicate in a variety of ways.

- workshops given by specialist drummers
- performance by Musica Viva
- specialist music classes

Visual Arts - Art activities provide unique opportunities for the children to explore their feelings, imagination and experiences and to make representations of their ideas in a visual form. The emphasis and strong support for Visual Arts at the school is reflected in the high level of achievement in the children's artworks, the quality of their participation and their enjoyment in creating them. Each child participates in a Visual Arts lesson once a week. Regular participation ensures a steady improvement in the skills, knowledge and confidence each child brings to the new challenges in the art making process.

Achievements include:

- improving skills in drawing and particularly in observational drawing
- exploring the elements of line, shape, texture and form in a series of artworks and the built environment at Bridge Road
- investigating of how primary colours can be mixed to create an infinite range of colours
- exploring artworks based on cartoon characters and T shirt designs
- investigating pattern, shape and colour by exploring patterns and symbols developing skills in spatial organisation
- recycling materials by building castles and towers and assembling photomontages
- manipulating clay to create pinch pots and coil pots
- learning to value their own and other's artworks, including their peers

Community Involvement

There is a program of small scale outings and excursions to a variety of industrial/commercial sites, parks, museums and galleries in and around the city. Each outing is carefully planned to ensure successful outcomes for children who are usually enrolled for at least one term before being invited to an event outside the school.

Usually excursions give children the opportunity to practise appropriate behaviours within the broader community.
This year there have been guest speakers/visitors at the school who have included:

- people with disabilities program – including a hearing impaired visitor and a visually impaired visitor and her guide dog
- local police discussing safety issues
- South Sydney Football representatives – football clinics
- Learn to swim lessons
- "Books in Homes" program speakers – this program culminated in a special celebration before Christmas when the author, Duncan Ball, presented all children with their books for home.

School initiatives

The Breakfast program

The Red Cross partly funds the school's Breakfast Program which enables children to access a healthy, nutritious start to the day. Although the school's staff prepares and supervises breakfast each morning – and often cook delicious treats – Red Cross volunteers support the program too, and are excellent role models for the children.

Most children attend the program and have the opportunity to use their social/living skills by enjoying a quiet, calm chat over their breakfast. Children wash their own utensils and make their own recess and lunch if necessary.

The school also provides a varied choice of fruit each day, for not only breakfast, but for lunch as well. "Brekkie BBQ's" are also held for celebrations – the children are involved in the preparation of food, serving and cleaning up.

Playground Program

The playground is a most significant teaching/learning environment for all students.

Playground periods are recognised as significant learning opportunities.

Each Assistant Principal has a clear role in guiding the children during breaks. One AP is on the playground (in addition to rostered staff) while the other AP is working on specific skills with some students. The Principal is available
for those having difficulty coping with incidentals.

**Specialist Services in 2010**

The school has offered 3 successful specialist services this year with generous funding from a private business organization. Each of the professionals visit the school on a weekly basis.

- Occupational therapist
- Speech Therapist
- Music program

**P.D. Health P.E.& Sporting programs**

The school has continued to focus on “fair play” in the sporting and fitness programs.

- “Sport” is an integral part of our program. All students are encouraged to participate in organised group games of cricket, soccer and football in the morning and at recess and lunch. Currently 90% of the older students are participating regularly.

**Students learn:**

- A variety of sporting and social skills explicitly as well as through observation of others

There is a strong emphasis on:

- Participation and persistence throughout the whole gain
- Sportsmanship
- Cooperation and
- Following instructions promptly

**Students develop:**

- Confidence in their ability to play a team game
- Increase their self esteem allowing them to succeed and fail numerous times during the activity while giving the opportunity to recover from issues quickly.
- Each class has participated in a ball skills initiative developed by a staff member – the focus has been on developing fine and gross motor skills alongside turn taking in a team.
- Children complete a tabloid circuit once a week where they learn specific skills necessary for playing the major games Weekly awards are earned by children at the completion of these activities – all children have beaten their “personal bests” and all can now skip independently; catching/throwing and ball skills have improved as has “fair play”.
- With consistent practice, the children’s bowling, batting, fielding skills have developed with the skills generalising into home school playgrounds
- Healthy Harold and Life Education team has visited and delivered powerful healthy lifestyle messages to all students
- South Sydney Juniors has promoted fair play and teamwork in their workshops at the school
- Two “learn to swim” programs have been completed successfully at Victoria Park Pool
- Ten children have been involved in a specialist “moving into learning” program at Sydney University
Student achievement in 2010

After the specialised intervention, the long term outcome of placement for the children in the school, is to return to their mainstream school full time, or to enrol in another supportive, special placement for a specific disability. From thirty six students enrolled in 2010, twenty children have “crossed the bridge” and completed their program.

Messages

Principal’s message

The school continues to provide a nurturing, respectful and caring learning community for young students to learn new and more appropriate behaviours. With the assistance of funding from a private benefactor, 2010 has been a most interesting year. The school has added considerable expertise to its specialist program by supporting complex students’ needs, through Music, Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy on site. Both therapists have become strong members of the Bridge Road team, as has the specialist music teacher. “Moving into Learning”, at Sydney University, links physical education to social and emotional gains. These and other school programs remain clearly focused on developing children’s confidence, their self esteem and trust in others. The children are then more likely to develop the inner strength and resilience necessary to take the personal risks necessary to access learning. With the focus now clearly on early intervention, the goal of the school’s management strategies, organization, and procedures is to create a healthy school culture that ensures a safe engagement and a successful intervention for students.

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 for development.

Jackie Sutton

School context

Student information

Student enrolment profile

The school enrolls K - 4, children with a mental health disability. There is a continuing trend of young children enrolling with complex disabilities.

Students enrolling in the school require a mental health diagnosis or they can access special consideration for placement. Students referred to the program for specialist intervention, are considered re their eligibility and suitability, by the Sydney Region placement panel which in Term 2, 2011 will meet two times a term – in Weeks 3 and 7.

At the end of Term 4, 2010, there are 21 boys and 2 girls enrolled from an annual enrolment in 2010 of 33 students.

Student attendance profile

Attendance at the school for most students is generally excellent. Children access Special Transport for the duration of their program.
Structure of classes

There are five classes with seven children in a class - the students are grouped to create workable dynamics. There are family groups of multi aged students and also classes of younger children with similar academic and social needs.

As children enter and exit the program throughout the year, the classes vary in structure and size.

Staff information

As specialist educators, the Bridge Road team has a diverse range of qualifications - not only in emotional and behavioural disturbances, but in early childhood, music and visual arts.

The five, school learning support officers, the school administration officer and the general assistant, complement the teaching staff with their relevant skills and expertise.

Our counsellor is a most valued member of the team, offering support to students, families and staff. She maintains an important link with the students' home school counsellors.

The combined team, including part time specialists, offers a healthy, harmonious work environment.

Staff establishment

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<td>Principal</td>
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<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>RFF</td>
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<td>E.D. Outreach</td>
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Staff retention

Staff has remained stable throughout 2010

Teacher qualifications

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

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<td>Postgraduate</td>
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Financial summary

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

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Expenditure

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<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance carried forward</td>
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A full copy of the school’s 2010 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council and/or the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2010

Achievements

The Student Welfare program

Student Welfare programs form the basic framework for the Bridge Road intervention. They enhance student outcomes by assisting children to develop confidence, trust in others and their self esteem. These programs enable children to change their perception of their world and themselves.

Children are supported in many ways:

- the behaviour management program is implemented in a consistent limit setting environment where behaviour is shaped by consistent use of positive reinforcement. Children learn to be responsible for their own behaviour. In a tally of Time Outs recorded for the year, there were 50% less timeouts this semester. 85% of children can consistently own their behaviour.
- in maintaining the focus of developing the children’s trust, all children progressed with their academic skills – 100% have moved up many levels in their P.M. readers while children involved in Count Me In Too have passed the Counting On stage
- there is positive verbal reinforcement in the form of encouragement and praise that is meaningful and regular. 90% children can accept praise appropriately
- extrinsic rewards are used in individual classrooms and the playground. All children have earned rewards and all have visited the local ice cream factory or visited the local park
- the functional language used by the staff has empowered all children to make decisions and relate more positively with others
• a multidisciplinary approach is used whereby the school liaises with health professionals, DOCS and other community agencies. Twenty children have accessed support in this way this year
• significant milestones are recognised and celebrated – birthdays, increase in integration and graduation from Bridge Road

Both short term academic and behavioural targets are set for the children. In the collation of student attainments of set behavioural targets, 75% of children progressed to more complex targets.

These targets are regularly refined and revised with recommendations from the therapists, counsellors and staff.

This year six Grade three and four Grade five children sat for their Basic Skills Test in their home schools. Three Grade two students achieved state average while one grade five child, achieved well above the average.

The evaluation of Count Me in Too indicated that all five children had reached the Counting On stage.

100% of the children's ball skills – throwing, catching and bowling and fielding and batting, have improved through the opportunity given for consistent practice in the school’s sport/fitness programs.

Achievements

Significant programs and initiatives

Personal Learning programs

Each child is placed on an individual learning program that is tailored to meet academic and behavioural needs.

The academic and social programs cater for children with significant gaps in their learning. Small group situations offer children individual assistance to increase the academic and social skills they can transfer to mainstream classes.

A particular focus is teaching students how to learn. Students are taught appropriate behaviours for this to occur – to look and listen, sit in seat, follow instructions, organise the tools for learning and task commencement and completion.

Information Technology

In 2010 Bridge Rd School students:

• took part in an animation workshop run by DigiEd, which involved:
  o devising a short narrative
  o making figurines from clay and creating backdrops
  o shooting a stop-motion film using a video camera and laptop
  o attaching sound and titles
  o editing and publishing the completed 'claymation'
• participated in a videoconference held by the Australian Museum about how to raise stick insects in the classroom. Students interacted with the presenter and with students from other schools during question time.

• utilised the large format of the interactive whiteboard to develop motor skills by way of ‘vertical handwriting’

• expanded their knowledge of Microsoft Word and gained experience in many aspects of desktop publishing such as:
  o changing fonts, font size and colour
  o importing and manipulating images
  o drawing 2D and 3D shapes and creating ‘WordArt’
  o aligning text and adding borders

• gained knowledge and experience at navigating the Mac OSX operating system, including opening, closing, finding, saving, moving and copying files.

• utilised the Firefox browser and Google search engine to locate websites, find information and images, and bookmark favourite sites.

• gained experience in digital photography using a class set of Canon cameras. They had opportunities to:
  o shoot photos and movies
  o learn about zooming and composition
  o upload photos to the computer
  o use simple photoediting software to crop and apply special effects

• used Stykz stick figure animation software to independently create frame by frame animations

• used Garage Band to create audio files by recording live vocal and instrumental tracks, and mixed them with tracks from the Garage Band sound library

• gained extension and practise in key learning areas through the use of both online and offline educational software such as ABC Reading Eggs, BBC Dance Mat Typing and Targeting Maths Labs

This year three additional Panasonic Interactive Whiteboards have been installed and all classrooms are now equipped with a board, speakers and a laptop computer. This technology has changed the way teaching and learning takes place and students are actively engaged, with on-task time and motivation noticeably increased. Students and teachers can interact directly with multimedia presentation material using the stylus, wireless mouse and wireless keyboard.

Bridge Rd School teachers:

• use a variety of media in their lesson presentations, such as video, audio, animation and graphics
• use the Smart Notebook software to create engaging detailed lessons with links to authentic online resources
• use Smart Tools to highlight, annotate, save and share notes
• use the IWB to demonstrate use of software
• utilise many web-based IWB interactives to support learning

In 2010 Bridge Road School staff attended training courses in:

• using Interactive Whiteboards in the classroom
• Smart Notebook software
• video conferencing
• using Mac OSX

In 2010 Bridge Rd School:

• signed up for the DET’s School Website Service and now has its first ever website which is gradually being populated with content relevant to our special setting
• had videoconferencing equipment installed as part of the Connected Classrooms program
• purchased a new computer backup system in the form of a Buffalo Terastation NAS device
• purchased six new iMac desktop computers for student use and one Lenovo PC for administrative use as part of the T4L program to replace aging and outdated computer stock

Aboriginal education

Aboriginal Education has been an integral part of the Bridge Road program with teachers using units of study across a number of key learning areas.

The children have visited:
• The Botanical Gardens while studying bush tucker and
• Centennial Park when studying the local flora and fauna and Dreamtime stories.

This culminated in a bush tucker and wild food feast to celebrate Naidoc Week.

A native garden has been planted in the new playground to incorporate bush tucker in the school’s healthy eating program.

The school is committed to ongoing initiatives in literacy for the three aboriginal students who show pride in their culture which is well respected by peers.

Respect and responsibility

As children learn to trust and gain confidence in their ability to learn and change, so too, will they learn to become more respectful of and responsible for themselves, others and their varied environments. Children learn from the modelling of staff, mentors, and the school’s diverse programs of engagement.

Other programs

Morning School Assemblies

The morning assemblies, in the school’s hall, led by the Assistant Principal and supported by the principal and some of the staff, play an integral part of the children’s program at Bridge Road. Active listening and appropriate effective communication are encouraged each day at this time. Children are also encouraged to speak in turn, join discussion and learn to listen to gain information and to contribute to the group.

Progress on 2010 targets

Target 1
To promote a safe and harmonious playground

Achievements:
• less inappropriate play
• less use of Time Outs
• more engagement and productive use of playground
• positive changes to the school culture
• increased level in participation, confidence and concern for others
• increase of “fair play”

Target 2
To enhance the students’ learning, particularly in literacy, by further development of teaching/learning programs using interactive whiteboards and the connected classroom
Achievements:
• level of engagement of staff and students
• increased student participation
• increase level of IT skills of staff and students
• frequency of use of the resources
• positive staff communication and sharing of knowledge

Target 3

To engage students to attain set outcomes through the introduction of new positive teaching/learning programs

Achievements:
• children attaining set outcomes in PLP’s
• learned, new behaviours generalising in different environments
• a strong, healthy school culture
• confident students willing to take a chance in learning new skills

Key evaluations

Educational and management practice

Teaching

Background
Discussion in staff meetings identified teaching as an area to target this year. This evaluation should assist in the clarification of the school’s commitment to providing relevant programs and teaching/learning styles that cater for the needs of children with a wide range of emotional and behavioural disabilities. Staff was most aware of and concerned with the literacy/numeracy needs of the younger cohort in Early Stage 1. This group of students had few of the requisite skills to learn how to learn. Patterns of learned inappropriate behaviours were also impacting on student ability to learn.

Information for the evaluation was gathered from SchoolMap Best Practice Statements survey on Teaching.

Findings
Parents, staff and children were surveyed but the findings must be viewed in consideration of the small size of the school.

Findings show that all staff believe that the school’s teaching programs are meeting the needs of the children in their special program. All agree that the commitment to literacy and numeracy remains the priority with a continuing integrated approach with the other key learning areas. Staff uses a variety of
programs to cater for the preferred learning styles of the children. The staff believes that the school's behaviour management program and its consistency in the management of challenging behaviour, maximises positive outcomes and encourages learning. At daily debriefing, staff agrees, there is valuable ongoing informal assessment of the children's academic and social programs. More formal assessment and reporting procedures are followed each term at the appraisal of children's placement. Here the collaborative decision making between parents, staff, home schools, relevant other agencies and the district committee, staff believe, clearly communicates information about the children's development.

Six out the ten parents who responded to the survey, thought that the school provided relevant teaching/learning programs, catering for the special needs of their children. The six parents/carers support the behaviour management program which they thought maximised their child's learning.

All children surveyed thought that their teaching/learning program is interesting and relevant to their needs.

**Future Directions**

Feedback from students, parents and teachers indicate that the following issues need to be explored:

- the sharing of students' achievements with parents/carers at the term appraisals of the children's placement at Bridge Road School.
- the sharing of children's assessments with the home school
- trial a specialist 1 : 1 literacy program with a target group of students in 2011.

The school's teaching/learning programs are strongly and clearly focused on developing children's confidence, their trust in others and their self esteem. Therefore the games and sports strand of the PDHPE curriculum has been an ongoing and integral part of the learning program at Bridge Road. With the introduction of extra P.E. programs in 2010, it was decided to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's programs in this area.

Information for this evaluation was collated from staff discussion, Sydney University Sport personnel, the Occupational Therapist working at bridge Road School and discussions with parents/carers.

**Findings and conclusions**

All relevant adults agreed that:

- there was an increased enthusiasm for physical activity
- the children showed a marked improvement in their ball skills of throwing, catching, bowling and kicking
- children moved with more competence and confidence when utilising these skills
- the confidence gained in ball skills led to six children joining a sporting club to play a winter sport on weekends
- the children learned the skills of fair play
- there were less incidents of inappropriate behaviours when the children were engaged in a game or sporting activity
- integration was more enjoyable for children who could competently join a team game in the playground
- children who played in a team enjoyed their training afternoons and their club functions

90% of the children were able to acknowledge their improvement in skills in playing sporting games. They stated that it made them feel successful.

**Future directions**

**Curriculum**

**Physical Education**

**Background**
• the school will continue with its current programs and increase the fitness program to three days a week.
• The school will target games and sport in 2011 as a major component of the school’s student welfare program to foster self esteem, confidence, fair play, fitness and healthy lifestyle
• the specialist “moving into learning” - (gross motor skills) program will continue @ Sydney University

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2010 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Parents and carers are involved in the Review of the children's placement at Bridge Road each term. Parents support the school's many programs.

Children at the school comment on how much they enjoy attending. They learn to trust staff and feel safe. They appreciate that staff listen to and talk to them and “always do what they say they are going to do”. There are very few absences which supports their comments.

Staff, families and children generally feel well supported and acknowledge that, as much as is possible, their needs are being met. Parents are particularly appreciative of the specialist speech pathology and occupational therapy offered by the school for their children.

Professional learning

In 2010, the school's Professional learning program focused on behaviour, literacy and numeracy and Information Technology in line with the School Plan. However, with the emphasis on early intervention, there has been a focus on preschool and Early Stage 1 resources and training.

The average expenditure for each staff member was $200 and the average days spent in professional training was 4.5

School development 2009 - 2011

With the focus on early intervention, new specialist and classroom programs and activities in literacy, human movement and music will be explored in 2011 alongside the continuation of existing relevant teaching/learning programs.
Targets for 2011

Target 1
To enhance student literacy levels across the school

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- speech pathologist available for children's communication skills - for receptive and expressive language
- occupational therapist working with children with few fine motor skills
- selected children to attend daily reading sessions with specialist teacher
- careful monitoring of progress of school's literacy programs
- communication with family, other agencies and home school

Our success will be measured by:

- number of students learning to read
- increase in literacy skills overall
- more appropriate behavioural changes

Target 2
To promote a healthy, happy school environment by extending the PD, Health, PE program in the school

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- daily fitness activities
- "Moving into Learning" program at Sydney University
- Continuing with Breakfast program
- Occupational Therapy available on site for children with poor fine and gross motor
- Fresh fruit - sliced and given to students at lunch daily
- 2 sessions yearly of the specialist learn to swim program
- regular Football workshops
- staff directed playground games at recess and lunch

Our success will be measured by:

- an improvement in both games and social skills
- more appropriate fair play
- increase in gross motor skills
- increase in participation in organized playground games
- a healthier, happy school culture and environment

Target 3
To support students by extending the creative arts program

Strategies to achieve this target:

- introduction of weekly music program by Australian Children's Music Foundation
- grouping children across the five classes
- class teacher assistance to initiate program

Our success will be measured by:

- level of engagement and participation in specialist music/singing classes
- increase in communication skills
• level of enjoyment
• increase of listening skills

About this report

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school’s future development.

Jackie Sutton, Principal
Lorraine Packett, Assistant Principal
Renny Finch, Assistant Principal
Ali Rodley, Class Teacher
Paul Parks, School Education Director Sydney Region

School contact information

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School Code: 5540

Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the