Our school at a glance

Students

Bridge Road School, located in Camperdown, in the Inner City of Sydney Region, is a K – 5 school for young children with mental health disabilities.

Staff

All teaching staff meets the professional requirements for teaching in New South Wales' 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.

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. 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:

“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 - fitness/sporting programs
- breakfast and morning assemblies
- creative arts program

Student achievement in 2011

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 four students in 2011, five children have ‘crossed the bridge’ and returned to their mainstream schools while five have enrolled in other settings of special placement.

Messages

Principal’s message

With the enrolment of several Kindergarten children in 2011, the school initiated a most successful Creative Play program which promotes communication and friendly play. This program will continue into 2012.

All school programs remain clearly focused on engaging children in learning, in developing the
children's confidence, their self esteem and trust in others. Children are then more likely to develop the inner strength and resilience necessary to take the personal risks necessary to access learning.

For three terms this year, the school accessed funding from a private organisation and was therefore able to offer the students, services in speech pathology, occupational therapy and a gross motor skill program - "Moving into Learning" at Sydney University. We are very grateful for the considerable generosity extended to the school during this time.

The staff is the school's greatest asset - their level of commitment and professionalism provides a nurturing, respectful, caring learning community for students who then have the opportunity to learn new and more appropriate behaviours.

The goal of the school's management strategies, organisation and procedures is to achieve a healthy school culture that ensures a successful intervention for students. Staff persistently reworks procedures and programs to attain this goal. In this way, children not only engage in learning, but reach the outcomes as set in their Personal Learning Programs.

The staff remains committed to supporting students in a calm, stable environment, clearly focusing the school's programs to enable children to change their perceptions of themselves and the environment around them.

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**

At the end of Term 4, 2011, there are 25 boys and one girl enrolled from the annual enrolment of 34.

There are 5 classes of seven children at the school enrolled from mainstream schools within and beyond the Sydney Region. There is also an outreach program for seven children.

Children access the school by Special Transport for the duration of their placement. They commence their intensive intervention of between three to six terms, for four days a week and integrate for one day in their home schools.

Students are taught how to learn; are engaged in systematic use of consequences; responsibility for own behaviour; compliance; anger control and appropriate socialisation.

The enrolment pattern is varied as there are children enrolling and exiting throughout the year.

Children know that from day one the goal is to "cross the bridge" by learning new and more appropriate behaviours to successfully reintegrate in their mainstream schools or access another appropriate specialist placement.

The school is most seriously committed to this goal.

**Student attendance profile**

Attendance at the school is generally very good. Children access Special Transport for the duration of their placement, which assists in keeping absences low.

**Class sizes and Structure of classes**

The school has a maximum enrolment of 35 students with seven children in a class. Often the students are grouped according to age but
classes often reflect different dynamics, ages and skills levels. The dynamic of the group is an important consideration.

Staff information

Staff establishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers of Emotional Disabilities</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>RFF/Teacher Emotional Disabilities</td>
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<td>Outreach teacher</td>
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<td>Counsellor</td>
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<td>School Administrative &amp; Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Staff retention

The staff remains stable in 2011

Teacher qualifications

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary:</th>
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<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
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<td>Balance brought forward</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
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<td>Tied funds</td>
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<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
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<td>Interest</td>
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<td>Trust receipts</td>
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<td>Canteen</td>
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<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Teaching &amp; learning</strong></td>
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<td>Key learning areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
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<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
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<td>Library</td>
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<td>School-operated canteen</td>
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<td>Utilities</td>
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<td>Trust accounts</td>
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<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
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A full copy of the school's 2011 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 2011

Achievements

Arts
At Bridge Road School each class participates in a Visual Arts lesson once a week in the school’s art room. Regular participation in art classes ensures a steady improvement in the skills, knowledge and confidence of the children. Over time students develop skills in the production of their own artworks, as well as skills in looking at works of art, including those of artists, their peers and their own artwork.

Visual Arts activities offer unique opportunities for creative thinking and opportunities to improvise solutions to art based problems. Students have the opportunity to learn about different materials and media and to explore a variety of art concepts and art forms. For example, in 2011 we investigated colour and compared the effect of colour to black and white in a series of paintings and drawings. Younger students made a series of monoprints about themselves and their families, whilst older students explored design by creating their own T-shirt designs and cartoon images. We also created masks to celebrate Chinese New Year.

Another aspect of the visual arts program is that it gives an opportunity for students to practise the skills in communication and self-control that they are learning with their teachers in their classrooms in a different context. There are opportunities to learn how to take and manage risks through creating artworks. There are also many opportunities to build self-esteem when students make an artwork they are proud of or discover effects or aptitudes they were unaware of.

During the year students contributed to two art exhibitions outside the school. The first was Operation Art at the Armoury Gallery. The artwork of two students was selected for the Teacher Resource Kit and the Art Bank collection. The second exhibition was a part of the “Magic of Metaphor” exhibition at the Seaview Gallery, Dulwich Hill High

Sport
There has been a focus on the development of fine and gross motor skills. Daily whole school fitness programs, “The Premier's Challenge”, “Moving into Learning” - a program specially devised for the students in the school at Sydney University, are proving successful in terms of all children participating and meeting set PLP outcomes.

The school has continued to focus on “fair play” across all programs.

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.

- children complete a daily “fitness” circuit where they learn specific skills leading to learning to play major games
- weekly awards are earned by children at the completion of these activities - all children have beaten their “personal bests”
- many students can now skip independently; catching/throwing and ball skills have improved as has “fair play”.

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
- stage 2 students participated in a weekly dance program during Semester 2

SUSF “Moving Into Learning” Program 2011

- During 2010 a group of Bridge Road students was involved in a physical education program at Sydney University. The “Moving into Learning” program was specifically designed to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of the students at Bridge Road.

- Each week the students travelled by bus to the university to engage in different sports including basketball, cricket, soccer, parachute games and the big favourites hockey and gymnastics. The lessons were an hour long and focused on a new sport each week. The beginning of each session focused on introducing and building up the pre-requisite skills for each sport, followed by a short team game or the opportunity to bring all the skills together on a special piece of gym equipment.

- The program aimed to develop the children’s physical skills as well as developing resilience, perseverance and self-esteem. An important part of the children’s engagement was that they have fun and learn to enjoy both the successes that come quickly as well as those that require more time and effort. The gym program gave the students opportunities to learn to cope with the fear of new challenges and the frustration of waiting for the rewards that come with participation, practice and being prepared to have a go.

- The expertise, encouragement, patience and good humour of the SUSF coaches, Charlotte and Renee was integral to the success of the program. It was one of the reasons that the children looked forward to returning to the uni each week.
The Integration Program

Students continue attending their home schools each Thursday throughout their program at Bridge Road. Although some children may only stay for a morning session at first, their time usually increases when progress is evident in both schools.

As students become more settled and confident in their own ability to manage their own behaviour, a second day of integration is planned.

At Bridge Road, students are learning to listen actively and communicate effectively: they are learning to trust others and think positively about themselves. Often these developing attributes are recognised in mainstream education as well as in the home environment. Our specialised staff endeavours to ensure that each small step is identified and acknowledged. Our goal is to encourage students to make informed choices in difficult situations and learn to solve problems efficiently regardless of the setting.

At the end of 2011, from a total of thirty-four children, ten students have completed their program. Of these five students transferred to other specialist placements

Significant programs and initiatives

Children referred to Bridge Road School, for a short intervention, complete their assessment schedules in their mainstream schools. The school places all children on an individual academic and social/behavioural program as outlined below.

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.

Both short term academic and behavioural targets are set for the children. 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.

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

90% 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.

Aboriginal education

Teachers have incorporated Aboriginal education through units of study across a number of curriculum areas. Children have studied units on land, identity and culture.

The school is committed to ongoing initiatives in literacy for our current nine Aboriginal children who display great pride in their Aboriginality that is respected by the other children.
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 responsible for and respectful of themselves, others and their different environments. Children learn from the modelling of staff, mentors and the school's diverse programs of engagement.

The Breakfast Program

The Bridge Road School Breakfast Club program offers children a healthy start to the day by providing them with a nutritious breakfast. The staff actively encourages children to develop their living and social skills in a positive environment.

The daily program is supported in part by the generosity of the Australian Red Cross and is supplemented by the school.

Students visit the cottage each morning where breakfast is on offer. They are greeted by a staff member on arrival and, after their name is marked on the roll, each student either remains for breakfast or returns to the playground.

Students sit at tables while eating and drinking and chat amongst themselves under the supervision of the staff. Children clear away their plates from the table and move to the kitchen to wash up.

Throughout the session children are encouraged to use good manners. As they leave they are reminded to thank and farewell staff.

At the conclusion of each term the success of the program is celebrated with a BBQ for the whole school.

Morning Assemblies

Each morning there is a school "meeting" in the hall led by and supported by staff. This assembly is an integral part of the children's program as it promotes active listening and effective communication. All children are encouraged to talk in turn, join in discussion and learn to listen to gain information or to contribute to the group.

Every month a "Bridge" Assembly is held to determine the students' progress on the school bridge. This visual representation of the children's progress is an important part of their intervention.

Progress on 2011 targets

The following targets set for 2011, are integral in creating a strong, healthy culture in the school. The playground is an extremely important teaching/learning environment for the students. Many staff are scheduled on duty on the playground during the day to ensure maximum gains in:

- social/behavioural areas
- fine/gross motor skills
- sporting skills

The school continually evaluates the engagement of students and management of behaviour.
Target 1

To enhance student literacy levels across the school

Our achievements include:

• number of students engaged in 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

Our achievements include:

• 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

Our achievements include:

• level of engagement and participation in specialist music/dance classes
• increase in communication skills

Key evaluations

In 2011 our school carried out evaluations of the school’s practices in Learning and its Literacy and Numeracy programs.

Educational and management practice

Learning

Background

Bridge Road School is a learning community that evaluates its current practices with the view to changing and reworking programs to improve the educational outcomes for students. With this in mind the school conducted a survey of staff, parents/carers and students to evaluate the learning opportunities provided by the school.
Findings and conclusions

The findings must be viewed in the light of the small size of the school and the short intervention for the students.

100% of staff responded, 75% of families and 80% of students responded to either a written, verbal or telephone survey. 90% of the responses indicated that:

- the learning programs supported the individual needs of the children
- the commitment to literacy, numeracy, should remain a priority
- technology, creative arts and sports programs be continued
- student learning needs are met through the use of a wide range of resources
- students learn to work independently and in small groups across a range of learning activities
- students gain confidence and take risks as part of their learning
- teachers are committed to ongoing training and development and are collaborative with their colleagues in sharing ideas and good practice

Future directions

Feedback from staff, families and students indicate the following issues to be further explored:

- engaging the younger K - 2 students to become more independent - using Best Start/specialist reading program to be designed with DEC support
- assisting Stage 1-2 learners to take more responsibility for their learning

Curriculum

The Evaluation of the school’s literacy and numeracy programs

Background

The school’s curriculum priorities are Literacy and Numeracy. All children have gaps in their learning and often their behaviour has impacted on their progress.

Because the school enrolled younger children this year, it was decided by staff to evaluate the existing programs in specific meetings in the second semester.

Information for this evaluation was collated from staff discussion and data collection, interviews and telephone discussions.

Findings and conclusions

All staff agreed that:

- the Creative Play program fostered communication and appropriate play in a most enjoyable, structured environment
- the Count Me In Too activities were engaging the Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 learners
- thirteen children made consistent progress on the PM readers
- six stage 2 learners who were reluctant writers, engaged in their program and made excellent progress
- the Kindergarten class was learning how to learn and engaging in set tasks
- 80% of the children were listening actively and responding and communicating appropriately in assembly each morning
- the use of literature across the curriculum was fostering an enjoyment of books
- “books in homes” and the presentation assemblies fostered a love of literature

Fourteen parents/carers:

- were appreciative of the significant gains their children had made, particularly in talking, reading and writing
- three parents thought the children should be set homework

Students

- enjoyed the Creative Play program
enjoyed Count Me In activities
like their literacy programs
enjoyed the success in moving PM levels
liked to publish their edited work using the computer

Future directions

The school:

will engage in training in a specialized reading program - all staff to be trained by DEC
will continue creating and implementing the children's PLPs
extend the range of games in Count Me In
add to the school's readers
send home copies for children to read at home

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2011 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Parents/carers participated in a variety of school activities, Triple P Program led by the school’s counsellor and the Review of their children's placement at Bridge Road - often held in the child’s mainstream school - the child’s progress is monitored, assessed and reported to both schools and the family. The positive comments from families indicated their delight in the improvement both behaviourally and academically as exhibited by their children. The ultimate satisfaction for the families is a return to the mainstream school or to another appropriate special placement.

Students express their satisfaction through their engagement and progress along the “Bridge”.

Professional learning

In 2011 the school's Professional Learning programs focused on technology, literacy and behaviour. As the school embraces technology to enhance its teaching/learning programs, this will remain the focus in 2012.

The average expenditure for teaching and support staff was $200 and the average days spent in training was 4.8.

School development 2012 - 2014

With the enrolment of increasing numbers of Kindergarten children in 2011, classroom and playground management and teaching/learning strategies require ongoing assessment and evaluation. The school is clearly focussed on Early Intervention and has prioritized the teaching of literacy and numeracy in Stages 1 and 2.

Targets for 2012

Target 1

To further enhance student literacy levels across the school - this target remains a priority in the school - particularly with a focus on K - 2

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- staff trained in early reading techniques by DEC specialist
- speech pathologist available for children re communication skills - for receptive and expressive language
- all children to have daily reading sessions
• 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 engaged in learning to read
• increase in literacy skills overall
• more appropriate behavioural changes

Target 2

To promote a safe and harmonious playground environment

Strategies to achieve this target include:
• Introduction of new school rules
• New class/school routines taught
• Students playing in designated areas in the playground
• Playground mentoring program
• Teaching students safe play on equipment
• Effective staff communication

Our success will be measured by:
• A calmer playground
• Students improving/gaining social skills
• Less behavioural issues
• Less staff stress

Target 3

To enhance student skills in information technology

Strategies to achieve this target:
• Specialist teacher working with all classes in the school's "computer lab"
• Class teachers to assist in instruction
• Sequenced program with clear outcomes for each stage

Our success will be measured by:
• Students engaged in learning
• Students proficient in their use of technology
• Students using technology skills across KLA’s

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
Renny Finch - Assistant Principal
Lorraine Packett - Assistant Principal

School contact information

Bridge Road School
127 Parramatta Road
Camperdown
Ph: 95198389
Fax: 95196418
Email: bridgerd_s.schools@det.nsw.edu.au
Web: www.bridgerd_s.schools.nsw.edu.au/
School Code: 5540

Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at: [http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/asr](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/asr)