



# Annual Report 2002

## HOME BUSH PUBLIC SCHOOL

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## Section 1—The School and its Major Achievements

### 1.1 The School

Homebush Public School is dedicated to providing educational programs which assist students to reach their potential in a supportive environment. Our school community believes that the first years of schooling are critical to the development of the values and attitudes necessary for life long learning. We have developed a strong academic tradition which is complemented by programs in the cultural and sporting areas.

The school is adjacent to Homebush railway station and the Homebush shopping strip. Our local enrolment area covers most of Homebush and part of Strathfield.

Our school is an established educational institution, having been on this site since 1885.

### 1.2 The Arts

During Education Week all students participated in our “Rat’s Tale” concert, which was based upon the story of “The Pied Piper”. Performances were held over two evenings and two matinees. The concert provided opportunities for students to showcase their skills in dance, drama, singing, speaking and the production of costumes and stage props.

Tamil and Chinese dance groups are a part of regular lunchtime activities provided for students and both the Tamil and Chinese groups performed at the opening ceremony of Homebush’s Bendigo Bank and in the school concert.

Students from Years 5 and 6 attended a children’s film festival in September. A number of students

accompanied by their parents participated in the prior judging of a film. Students in Year 6 are currently working on producing three short films.

A school disco and a bush dance were held for all students K-6. The annual junior and senior talent quests continued to be a popular event with students.

### 1.3 Sport

Sport and fitness are valued at Homebush PS. Teams are entered in summer and winter NSW Primary Schools Sports Association (PSSA) competitions for inter-school games in cricket, softball, soccer and netball. Primary school sport includes gymnastics at the State Sports Centre and hockey at the State Hockey Centre, where students are coached by specialists. Basketball, volleyball, touch football, tennis, T-ball and soft-crosse are taught at school. K-2 students learn skills in preparation for primary sport. Students in Years 2-6 attend learn to swim lessons during Terms 1 and 4.

All children participate in weekly aerobics/fitness activities in line with stage outcomes listed in the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) syllabus.

Homebush PS conducts swimming, cross country and athletics carnivals and teams are then selected to participate in the Western Suburbs Zone carnivals. This year, two students represented the zone in cross country at Sydney East Area level and eleven students represented in cricket at area level.

### 1.4 General and Specific School Initiatives (including citizenship)

Students at Homebush PS are actively encouraged to participate in a wide variety of cultural, academic, sporting and recreational pursuits.

Dance groups, both creative and cultural, chess club, computer activities, stamp club and specialist games skills are held during lunchtime. Singing groups formed for special occasions practise before school. The dance groups and the choir performed during “A Rat’s Tale” and the choir also performed for our annual ANZAC ceremony.

During 2002, Homebush PS was one of 180 schools in a pilot computer skills assessment program conducted by the Department of Education and Training. Year 6 students completed pen and paper and computer aspects of the pilot assessment. Results were pleasing. There were 34 areas where students were above the state average; no areas of need were indicated.

Students from Homebush PS again participated in Cyberspace, a writing group for students in Years 5-8. Three students in the program attended a workshop presented by an author. The workshop’s aim was to encourage students to write and to refine their writing skills.

Year 6 students participated in an experimental program to develop student outcomes in writing, specifically writing film scripts. They wrote a script, made a filming schedule and produced the film.

## **Section 2—Evaluation of Key School Programs**

### **2.1 Educational and Management Practice Evaluation—Planning**

#### **Background**

The school used the SchoolMap Best Practice Statements on Planning to identify areas of strength and weakness in the school’s performance in this area. All staff, all Year 6 students, parents of Year 6 students and a small focus group from the P&, were surveyed. Year 6 was chosen because they have had experience with the school systems over a period of time. Thirty percent of the parents responded.

#### **Findings**

Results of the survey showed that there was a strong correlation between the attitudes of the staff, parents and students in all areas.

Survey results indicated that staff, parents and students mostly believe that they are always or usually well informed about school planning and purpose.

Areas that could be improved upon in involving the school community in planning are:

- the reasons for the purchase of resources and the processes used to allocate these resources; and

- school community involvement in the development of planning documents.

#### **Future Directions**

Prior to the survey, discussion had already occurred with the Parents’ and Citizens’ Association (P&C), on how the school could keep its community better informed about school processes.

Steps have already been taken to include more information on school processes and resources in the school newsletter. The school is encouraging members of the P&C to make contact with other P&C bodies so that they can become aware of additional ways to be an active partner in the school.

### **2.2 Curriculum Evaluation-Independent Reading**

#### **Background**

Some students had difficulty selecting appropriate books for their independent reading despite a wide selection available from school and local libraries. Additionally, parents sought access to lists of suitable literature for their children.

To assist in addressing these issues the school, after investigation, purchased a program with financial assistance from the P&C.

The program chosen was the Scholastic Lexile Framework, Matching Readers to Books. Every student in Years 3-6 was tested in February and matched to books for their reading comprehension level using the SRI interactive computer adaptive reading comprehension test. Based upon the results of the test, students were supplied with a list of books at their reading level in the subject category of their choice.

Existing library books were reorganised to indicate the lexile level and additional books were purchased from the lists. Extra shelving was purchased to accommodate the expanded library collection. Bulk loans were given to classrooms.

Students were retested at the beginning of Term 3 and individual growth reports were produced for teachers. Students with negative growth were retested to ensure accuracy of results.

#### **Findings**

The lists produced for each student were not fully utilised by some students. Some teachers monitored the type and number of books read through individual student reading logs. The monitoring and record keeping was not consistent across the grades. Students were given book lists based upon their subject choice

and it was felt that for some students their reading subjects needed to be broadened.

Teachers of senior primary students felt that the quizzes used and the tracking system assisted in identifying students at risk. They would like to investigate this aspect further. Teachers of junior primary students wanted greater emphasis on reading for enjoyment rather than on assessment.

It was felt that the Year 3 initial reading levels and progress based upon the quizzes, were affected by students lack of familiarity with computer assessment.

### **Future Directions**

To expand this program:

- all students will be required to keep a reading log;
- the librarian will investigate strategies for students to broaden their subject choice;
- a study will be conducted to see if the program is accurate and suitable for student tracking; and
- the technology coordinator will investigate the use of computer assisted assessment with younger students.

## **2.3 Programs to Support Learning**

### **Technology**

During the year, as part of the technology plan, we have updated both computer laboratories. The senior laboratory is now equipped with a large screen and a data projector and a large screen TV has been installed in the junior laboratory. This has improved teaching outcomes, as sequencing of commands and use of software generally, can be demonstrated more effectively. Learning outcomes for students were enhanced as the work of individuals and groups was made more accessible to their peers. The larger screens have also been more effective as a means of promoting discussion.

The library has had a minor upgrade to enable students to access their files and browse the Internet as well as making OASIS enquiries.

Students continue to have up to two hours per week working on their own computer in the laboratories. Students from Year 2 and above continue to develop their word processing skills and are able to save and load their files across a network. All staff and students have access to their files from any computer in the school.

## **2.4 Equity Programs**

### **Aboriginal Education**

All students K-6 learn about Aboriginal culture and history through human society and its environment (HSIE), English and creative and practical arts (CAPA).

Students in Years 3-6 focused on Aboriginal culture during National Aboriginal and Islander Observance (NAIDOC) Week. Year 6 conducted the assembly and explained various aspects of Aboriginal culture including the history of the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag. Issues such as Sorry Day and Mabo were raised.

### **Multicultural Education**

At Homebush PS, 95% of the school population is from a non-English speaking background. As a school, we are committed to developing an understanding and appreciation of the diversity of cultures within the school and the wider community. The curriculum is implemented with sensitivity to the specific language and cultural needs of the students, together with an awareness of issues concerning anti-racism and equity.

Tamil and Chinese are the predominate groups within the school. Specialist community language teachers teach these languages. Multicultural education continues to encourage involvement and support from our ethnic communities, as well as fostering a greater understanding and knowledge of those cultures.

Chinese and Tamil students published various text types in their mother tongues and samples of these were presented in the school newsletter. Chinese and Tamil artwork are displayed in the school's foyer and in the classrooms.

Homebush PS has the equivalent of three fulltime English as a second language (ESL) teachers. ESL teachers and the community languages teachers support grade reading, writing and mathematics programs throughout the school.

## **2.5 Programs to Support Students**

### **Students with Disabilities**

Homebush PS has a Learning Support team consisting of the support teacher learning difficulties (STLD), school counsellor and both assistant principals. This team meets every Wednesday to plan for the ongoing needs of students with learning difficulties and welfare issues.

Currently, fourteen students who have been identified with mild to moderate support needs are receiving additional support through state integration funding. These students were placed on individual learning programs to help to cater for their specific needs.

Five students have received additional support from the district reading and language teachers.

State integration funding, together with school funds have been used to employ two part-time teacher's aides to assist with implementing programs for students with identified learning difficulties. Learning resources needed to support the learning difficulties programs throughout the school were purchased.

### **Student Welfare**

The Student Welfare Policy at Homebush PS is designed to ensure a safe, happy and healthy learning environment for all. The policy encourages self-discipline. A copy of this policy is provided to parents when they enrol their child at the school. The policy provides clear guidelines for students and staff in the promotion of positive behaviour through:

- weekly achievement and citizenship awards as well as silver and gold awards for excellent standards of behaviour;
- a levels-contract system;
- house points reward system; and
- morning and weekly assemblies to promote and celebrate student achievement.

It is our aim to foster an environment where the self-confidence of students is positively encouraged and enhanced. The student councillor system and the Peer Support program have helped to develop leadership qualities in our senior students. These programs have increased the students' awareness of their role within the school as well as their level of active participation.

### **Drug Education**

The school's drug education program follows departmental guidelines in implementing units of work to provide students with knowledge, attitudes and skills that will enable them to understand the harm associated with inappropriate drug use. Drug education combines with a variety of other programs to support the PDHPE program.

Strategies related to drug education are also discussed during the student-led Peer Support program. Parents are required to follow school guidelines when their child requires regular medication at school.

## **2.6 Student Performance in Literacy**

Homebush PS has continued to maintain a strong focus on literacy skills this year. Eight additional teachers received training in the Basic Skills Test (BST) marking of writing and the skills learnt are being applied to the assessment of student writing across primary grades.

Students in each grade are grouped for skill based reading lessons. The STLD, ESL teachers and teacher's aides are utilised during these times resulting in smaller group sizes. This structure has allowed the school to successfully cater for a wide range of abilities within each grade.

Year 1 students are monitored twice yearly on their reading level progress using running records and oral questioning of the text read. Growth results are monitored through to the end of Year 2 for students who are below grade level in learning to read.

### **Year 3 Performance in Literacy**

Sixty-three students sat for the BST in literacy, achieving slightly above the state average for both boys and girls.

Students performed well above state average in some areas of reading such as, description, poetry, recount and narration texts, demonstrating a consistent growth in this area, in accordance with 2001 results. There were thirteen questions where students performed below the state average involving, identifying the purpose of a piece of writing, relating the heading to the text and figurative language.

There was an improvement in overall results in language indicating strength in spelling and punctuation and an improvement in grammar. This result was consistent with the 2001 results.

Our students performed slightly below the state average in the two writing assessment tasks. Strengths were shown in the use of tense, verb forms, pronouns, simple sentence structure and paragraphs. Areas for development that the school will be focusing on are; the use of more complex sentence construction with clauses, using connectives, the use of more descriptive and technical language and using more effective verbs and adverbs.

### **Year 5 Performance in Literacy**

Eighty-eight Year 5 students sat for the BST in literacy. Student progress from Year 3 to Year 5 was above the state growth average. There was little difference between the reading and language results this year. Results have been improving over the last

five years with 61% of students being in the top two bands.

Students performed very well in questions about inferring the meaning of an idiomatic term and reading image labels. Many students had difficulty making an inference in a poem and identifying the main idea in a narrative.

Areas for development that the school will be focusing on are: incorporating more poetry in reading and writing units, continuing with the current work in reading, further development of inferential skills and the development of complex sentence structure in writing.

## **2.7 Student Performance in Numeracy**

### **Year 3 Performance in Numeracy**

Students in Year 3 performed well above the state average in each of the three strands, for both girls and boys.

In number, areas of strength were the four operations and fractions. Students performed well in length, in measurement and in the understanding of the properties of three-dimensional figures in space.

There were no areas in numeracy where the student results were 10% lower than the state percentage of correct responses.

### **Year 5 Performance in Numeracy**

For many years Homebush students have performed well in numeracy and this trend has continued with 70% of the students being in the top two bands. This is well above the state average. Eight students did not achieve the state average growth from Year 3 to Year 5 and these students are currently being catered for in grade maths groupings. Forty-one students however, progressed more than double the average state growth. There were 21 questions where the school's percentage correct was 10% higher than the state percentage correct. No question was poorly answered.

## **Section 3—Targets**

### **3.1 Progress on 2002 targets**

#### **Target 1: To improve student outcomes through more systematic monitoring of indicators.**

Whilst using SchoolMate to generate the Semester 2, 2002 reports for Year 2 students, it was found that the program did not meet the reporting requirements for which it was purchased.

It was therefore decided that the school reporting system used by K-2 over the last few years would be utilised for K-4. This system uses Excel and is able to generate individual reports.

Although the use of the SchoolMate program for reporting to parents and student performance data storage has been discontinued, the program was a catalyst for an in depth study of outcomes and indicators. All staff became familiar with using outcomes and indicators to assess students, storing individual student levels on a data base and assessing and reporting in indicators.

#### **Target 2: To increase the general knowledge and vocabulary of students throughout the school.**

Data for an analysis of vocabulary used by students in Years 3-6 was collected from students' text writing, observation of class work and a focus group of Years 3-4 teachers. Student outcomes, particularly for Years 3-4, generally indicated a need to develop greater field knowledge and the language to express and develop that knowledge. Students in Years 5-6 have shown vocabulary development, particularly in text writing. Students in the senior years demonstrated an ability to use technical language when that language was taught explicitly. Year 5-6 outcomes in non-fiction text types improved significantly. Use of expressive verbs needs further development.

To promote growth in student vocabulary, all students in Years 3-6 had their own dictionary. Additionally, each class teacher used a large dictionary in the classroom.

Teachers observed an increase in general knowledge, particularly in Years 5-6. There was an emphasis on programs such as "Behind the News" and students made links between that program and what they had seen on television and read in newspapers.

Year 6 followed two programs which entailed each child in a class having access to a newspaper for two, two week periods. The programs were based on the "Commonwealth Games" and "How Things Work".

Students have demonstrated a greater awareness of the events which are occurring locally, nationally and internationally.

#### **Target 3: To begin the implementation of the Environmental Education Policy K-6.**

Implementation of the Environmental Education Policy K-6 has begun.

An Environmental Education Committee has been formed comprising a teacher from each stage and the

school general assistant. Sub-committees will be formed next year to implement and oversee the three focus areas of the policy.

Staff training has included an inservice at the Field of Mars study centre for the committee coordinator and the whole staff being inserviced on the new policy. Staff meetings have also been held to discuss the implementation of the policy through class programs.

The local council has been consulted and advice has been given on devising a strategy for planting, garden bed construction and soil.

Beautification of the school grounds has commenced. Garden beds have been planted with the assistance of the general assistant. Kindergarten and Year 1 students, as a part of their Science and Technology program, have been involved in the planting of seeds, moving seedlings, monitoring plant growth and watering.

### 3.2 Targets for 2003

**Target 1: To promote the role in society of creative and practical arts (CAPA) and to expose all students to the various art forms.**

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- raising awareness in the school community of the role of the arts in society;
- ensuring that the syllabus outcomes are used to plan and implement CAPA programs; and
- developing a school CAPA plan which includes the training of staff and parents on the CAPA art forms.

Our success will be measured by:

- the extent to which school and community members value and support the school CAPA program;
- CAPA subjects being taught in an explicit and systematic way; and
- student achievement in the arts being assessed and reported upon.

**Target 2: To begin the implementation of the new Mathematics syllabus.**

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Mathematics Committee producing a plan for the full implementation of the syllabus;
- familiarising staff with the syllabus strands and stage content; and

- preparation for the implementation of some strands in 2004.

Our success will be measured by:

- the production of an action plan for the full implementation of the new syllabus;
- all staff having a knowledge of the new syllabus structure and theory; and
- all staff are prepared for the implementation of the designated strands for 2004.

**Target 3: To integrate Environmental Education outcomes throughout all Key Learning Areas.**

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- reviewing HSIE, science and technology and English units of work and including environmental education outcomes into these units;
- through a science and technology project, developing a school recycling system; and
- re-establishing vegetation in the school grounds for use in science and technology and HSIE units.

Our success will be measured by:

- students' development of knowledge, skills, understandings, values and attitudes relating to environmental education;
- reduction of litter and successful use of recycling bins; and
- the establishment of garden beds and native plantings and their use in science units .

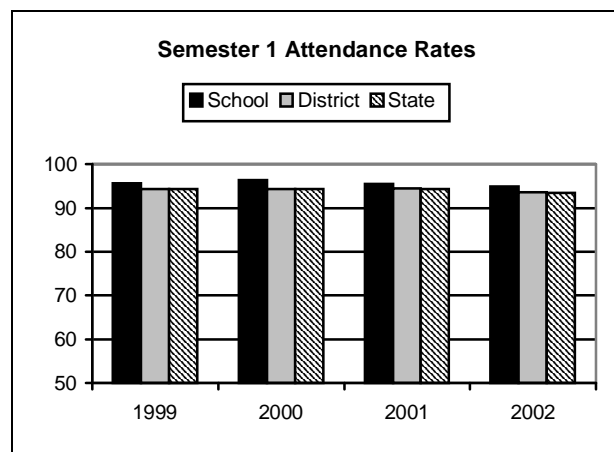
## Section 4—School Features

### 4.1 School Enrolment and Attendance Profile

Homebush PS has maintained its maximum number of eighteen classes. The year closed with an enrolment of 516 students.

At the end of the first semester 96% were from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE). A total of 35 language backgrounds are represented within the school. Fifty-one point five percent of students speak Tamil; 20% speak Chinese; 7% speak Korean 2% speak Tongan and 2% speak Arabic. An additional 13% speak other languages from the Indian sub-continent.

From the second week of Semester 1, a total of 140 students enrolled. Of these, thirteen were new arrivals to the country. Twenty-four students left the school up to October 2002. Forty-one per cent of primary students complete their primary years at this school.



#### 4.2 Structure of Classes

The students at Homebush Public School are organised into eighteen classes; fourteen parallel classes and four multi-aged classes. A majority of boys in Year 6 led to the formation of an all male class for the third year. Students in all classes were supported by ESL teachers. Classes were further supported by reading groups and in some cases, maths groups.

The Chinese and Tamil community language programs continued, although in Semester 2, the classes for students in Years 3-6 were moved from 8.00am-9.00am to times within usual school hours. All students in the program receive two hours of instruction each week. In Term 4, Kindergarten students commenced community language lessons in Tamil and Chinese.

#### 4.3 Staffing

Principal

Assistant principals (two)

Executive teachers (two)

Classroom teachers (fourteen)

Teacher librarian

ESL (three)

Release teacher (3.56 days per week)

Part-time teacher (4 days per week)

Support teacher (3 days per week)

Chinese community language teacher

Tamil community language teacher

Clerical assistants (2 full time and 1 part-time 3dpw)

Full-time general assistant

#### 4.4 Parent and Caregiver Involvement and Participation

Homebush Public School seeks and receives support from the members of its community. There has been good support for events such as open days, parent teacher evenings and in particular, our K-6 "Rats" concert. Parents assisted with many aspects of the concert including helping to prepare Chinese and Tamil items, setting the price of tickets and selling them, providing a photography service and helping with the sale of food and drinks. Additionally, parents have actively supported the library, the STLD programs and the community language classes.

The P&C has again committed itself to supporting school programs and providing resources. This year it contributed funds for the purchase of a photocopier. The P&C has maintained a keen interest in school programs, particularly the Chinese and Tamil community language programs. Parents are currently investigating various ways in which such programs can be delivered.

The School Council continues to play a leading role in helping to manage the interests of our school community. This year the School Council has reviewed costs, contracts and procedures for use of school facilities

#### 4.5 Community Use of School Facilities

The school buildings are used by a wide variety of community groups. The school hall is rented by sporting, dancing, drama, religious and various cultural organizations. The money raised is used to purchase school resources and to maintain the hall.

The Russian and Tamil language schools have continued to use the school classrooms during the weekends. The Tamil school has also used classrooms during the week. The School Council is monitoring all aspects of the use of the school facilities.

## 4.6 Financial Statement Summary

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

<b>Income</b>	<b>\$</b>
Balance brought forward	0.00
Global funds	0.00
Tied funds	0.00
School & community sources	0.00
Interest	0.00
Trust receipts	0.00
Canteen	0.00
<i>Total Income</i>	<u><u>0.00</u></u>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Teaching & learning	0.00
Library	0.00
Training & development	0.00
Tied funds	0.00
Casual relief teachers	0.00
Administration & office	0.00
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	0.00
Maintenance	0.00
Trust accounts	0.00
Capital programs	0.00
<i>Total expenditure</i>	<u><u>0.00</u></u>
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<u><u><b>0.00</b></u></u>

## Voluntary School Contributions

The amount of the annual voluntary contribution is \$36 per student.

## Principal's Comment

A full copy of the school's 2002 financial statement is available from the school.

Within realistic budgetary constraints, the school is continuing to provide quality resources for teaching and learning.

Accumulated funds have been allocated for upgrading/replacing expensive technology, reading and library resources over the next two years. Additionally, there will be major purchases for the new maths syllabus and for CAPA.

## 4.7 About This Report

The self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year, analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes and synthesised it in this report. Targets have been determined for the school's future development.

Members of the school self-evaluation committee included:

Lorraine Mitchell, Assistant Principal  
Mrs Vijayakumar, Parent Representative  
Daryl Jacobs, Chief education Officer  
Chris Tonkin, Acting Principal

### Public Meeting

The school will hold a meeting to discuss the contents of this report at the school at 7.00pm on Tuesday 11 March, 2003. You are encouraged to come to discuss the information contained in this report.

**Chris Tonkin**  
**Acting Principal**

The district Chief Education Officer provided guidance to the school during the self-evaluation process. The contents of the annual report have been validated by the Chief Education Officer.

**Daryl Jacobs**  
**Chief Education Officer**  
**Granville**

Targets contained in the report have been endorsed by the District Superintendent. The targets are used to facilitate district planning and allocation of district resources.

**Barry Higgins**  
**District Superintendent**  
**Granville**

