Messages

Principal’s message

At Royal Far West School (RFWS) we believe that all children have the right to achieve their potential - no matter where they live, whatever their medical condition or disability and whatever their family circumstances. To achieve this goal, we work closely with families, country schools and regions and with RFW clinical services to provide information, consultancy, resource advice, professional development and program assistance. We have an increasingly strong focus on working across the state using video conferencing and internet-based video communication for individual, ongoing student support.

More information about the school may be found at www.royalfarwest-schools.nsw.edu.au

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.

Jenny Rayner, RFWS Principal

School Council message

Royal Far West School has continued to be a groundbreaking innovator in using computer technology to provide continuity and ongoing support for their students. It also provides assistance for teaching staff in rural areas in coping with the difficulties they face in dealing with children with learning problems, particularly with respect to literacy. The nature of this School is evolving from being of short term educational assistance to disadvantaged children to that of being involved in their long term development. It is an exciting shift with the potential, by working with country schools, to bring about a significant improvement in the educational progress of the children.

The Principal and staff deserve great credit for the progress that is being made. It is also important to note the very good working relationship that has developed between the School and Royal Far West. This has led to a much more holistic approach in tackling the complex issues that arise with children with health and learning problems.

David Barr, President, RFWS School Council

Student messages

Group 1 Lots of fun; iPads; digging in the sandpit; playing with friends; singing songs

Group 2 Amazing; cool; lots of fun; I get happy when I come here; I felt scared at first but then became happy because everyone was nice

Group 3 Awesome; fun; great; fun lessons; I like researching stuff; really good teachers

Group 4 10/10; Awesome; Fantastic; Mad; Fully sick
**Parent Messages**

The school is just wonderful...I feel comfortable and the kids love it as well

Friendly staff and up-to-date technology

The video conference you ran with our school and RFW was brilliant, absolutely brilliant. The school has put in place everything that was suggested and it all worked!

I love how the teachers are very good with the children and treat them all the same

It is so relaxed and caring...wonderful!

**About our school**

We provide educational services to the clients of the Royal Far West (RFW) and are also part of the NSW Centre for Effective Reading.

Although we are located on the beachfront at Manly, all students are from country NSW, often from remote areas of the state. All children come to RFW accompanied by a parent or carer. The only exception to this is the residential program run by the Centre for Effective Reading Manly.

Our students, aged 3-18 years, have a range of medical conditions, including developmental, learning, behavioural, emotional and communication difficulties and disorders. At least 20% of our students are Aboriginal. We enrol twice as many boys as girls. Virtually 100% of clients of RFW clinical services aged 3 ½ to 18 attend our school as part of their program while in Manly.

Students are generally short-stay admissions, although students in the Centre for Effective Reading residential program may be at RFWS for up to four weeks.

Royal Far West School comprises

- 5 classes, including an integrated class for students with very high support needs. All students in these classes are clients of RFW health services.
- The Centre for Effective Reading Manly. The Centre provides multidisciplinary assessments and personalized programs to country students with complex reading difficulties. Students are referred from all school sectors. They are not generally clients of RFW.
- SOLVE IT, the RFWS literacy outreach program provides individual structured lessons three times a week to 30 students at any one time. Lessons are delivered using internet technology.

During 2012 RFWS enrolled 1500 students from more than 400 schools and preschools across country NSW. We work with approximately 56 students at any one time.
**Staff information**

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

**Staff establishment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSP Teachers</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>8.822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.822</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The National Education Agreement requires schools to report on Indigenous composition of their workforce.

RFWS is proud to have a full time Aboriginal Education Officer.

**Staff retention**

We had a 90% retention rate for permanent and temporary teachers from 2011 to 2012, with one teacher retiring.

**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>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What our teachers and support staff say about RFWS**

At RFWS we:

- Empower parents
- Are welcoming, caring and nurturing
- Provide a safe, supportive and secure learning environment
- Are committed to our students
- Are inclusive, accommodating, tolerant and collaborative
- Value every student
- Are at the cutting edge of education
- Work as a cooperative team

**Financial summary**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary</th>
<th>30/11/2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>127559.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>111824.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>183209.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>20820.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>7643.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>455058.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Expenditure</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Balance carried forward** | 216993.13 |

3
A full copy of the school’s 2012 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 2012

Achievements
Our programs focus on early assessment, collaborative planning, targeted and intensive intervention and the use of cutting edge technology.

Through innovation and strong partnerships with parents, rural schools and agencies and Royal Far West clinical services, we are impacting on the educational achievements and wellbeing of country students.

Academic
As all of our students are enrolled elsewhere, RFWS does not hold results of state or national testing.

Significant programs and initiatives
In response to the needs of our students, we have a very strong focus on literacy, on early learning and on building the capacity of our parents, carers and partner schools.

Video Conferences with Rural Schools
Multidisciplinary video conferences with home school teams, including parents, have become an integral part of the assessment and support package offered by RFWS and RFW.

Students are identified as being suitable for a video conference at our weekly health and education case conferences.

RFWS office staff contact schools to make the offer of a video conference with the RFW-RFWS team and manage all associated documentation, ongoing communication, video conference room bookings, agendas and technical information.

Video conferences are based in one of the two RFWS Connected Classrooms. Participants at Manly may include a paediatrician, paediatric psychiatrist, psychologist, speech pathologist, occupational therapist, social worker, special educator, school counsellor, Aboriginal Education Officer and literacy teacher. Videoconferences are chaired and minuted by the RFWS Principal, Assistant Principal or school counsellor.

Our partner rural school teams generally include a member of the executive, classroom teachers, school counsellor, Aboriginal Education Officer, Learning and Support Teachers and possibly regional staff. Parents are always invited and encouraged to attend. In 2012 we had only 2 videoconferences without parents.

The videoconferences provide an open venue for information sharing and collaboration. As the minutes are being taken, a plan is developed with specific goals and planned actions. The people responsible for the implementation of the plan and a timeframe for the plan are included. The agreed plan is read out to the participants during the videoconference. Minutes, including the plan, are emailed to all participants, generally within 48 hours.

The demand for video conferences is increasing exponentially, with 95 held in 2011, our first year of operation and 132 in 2012.
Literacy Programs

RFWS Reading Assessment Program

During 2012 our assessment team carried out 451 formal reading assessments and 177 Early Literacy Assessments.

All assessments are followed up with individual parent interviews and written reports to parents, home schools and RFWS clinical services. Families are provided with easy-to-implement strategies and games for home use to develop skills and a pack of suitable reading materials.

In some cases where our partner schools in rural areas have been unable to implement a recommended individualized program, we have been able to provide 1:1 instruction through our SOLVE IT program (see below). In 2012 22 of our students were placed on SOLVE IT as an outcome of a reading assessment held at RFWS.

SOLVE IT (School outreach learning using volunteer tutors and Information Technology)

RFWS provides instruction in a structured reading program using internet-based technology and an interface designed by the NSW Curriculum, Learning and Innovation Centre (CLIC) based on Adobe Connect.

Students log onto SOLVE IT at their own school and are linked to a tutor working from RFWS in Manly.

SOLVE IT uses 70 trained volunteer tutors from the Manly area working under the direct supervision of a highly skilled literacy teacher.

Using a headset and webcam, the tutor and student are able to see and hear each other and the instruction screen, designed by NSW CLIC.

By the end of 2012 70 students had been supported through the SOLVE IT program, half being Aboriginal and one third in high school. We are able to manage 30 students at any one time.

During this year the NSW Department of Education and Communities conducted a formal evaluation of SOLVE IT, looking at the impact of the sessions on student engagement, attitude to learning, wellbeing and attendance at their home school. A full report from the evaluation should be available early in 2013. Preliminary findings can be found on page 12 of this report.

What do SOLVE IT students, schools, parents and online tutors say?

Students

It’s made it even better to learn

I can say more things, I can understand more things

School’s better now that I’m better at learning

I think school’s improved heaps...I don’t find it as hard to read and write things and spell
It helped me with stuff I hadn’t learnt yet
It’s helped my work at school lots because before I never really used to read that much
Now I can read out loud in the classroom and that but before I was really shy and couldn’t read out loud, I’d just freeze
It was good talking to the tutor online

The best thing about working online was not having to travel a long way.

Doing it on the computer was good because I like computers and reading.

What do our partner rural school teachers say?
N. is very excited because I tested him at the beginning of the year on spelling and tested him again last week and he has made the most progress in the whole class. I’m sure SOLVE IT has a lot to do with that.

We really appreciate your help and support. J. has consistently worked on your program almost every day and it is pleasing to hear that progress is being made. Thank you once again for supporting our students, families and teachers.

Glad to see you have the same perspective on T’s progress as we do. She is so willing to decipher the code. This is the most consistent success she has achieved thus far.

I really think his attitude towards learning in general has improved...He tends to re-attempt more, so if he has a problem with something he will have another ago and in general needs less help in class. It’s made him more positive about learning.

It was pleasing to see him become excited about learning

He was willing to take more risks with learning

He has become much more independent and more engaged with the books we are reading in class

He’s far more interested in the things that are happening in class

Working on line has had an immense influence on X’s behaviour and attitude

Increased self-confidence, not only in relation to online tasks but his ability to self-regulate

What do parents say?
I’d like to thank everyone who has been involved with teaching T., especially in the last 6 months. She is enjoying learning and developing more confidence (slowly, but surely). I truly appreciate your hard work.

My child is confident in reading out loud at home, where everyone can hear him, and he asks what things mean now without being embarrassed. I notice him even picking up his Science Experiment book that he has had for year and is now reading which experiments he would like to try.

They have totally caught up and gone beyond what normal kids their age would be reading.

All her assignments seem to be improving because she can read the actual words now – before she didn’t understand.

X will read and read and she will write stories now.

Online tutors
X’s behaviour has just changed so much, she’s just so much better in her approach to learning.

X seemed to make more effort as the sessions continued….he realizes he can succeed
As he began to recognize his own success he became more confident with using the skills he was acquiring or having a go at deducing meaning from text.

X was originally very reticent, spoke so softly she couldn’t be heard; now she’s chatty and easily heard and understood.

The one-to-one online I think does keep them focused

I was working with a 14-year old boy. He’s been suspended from the local school so was working at home...and yet he used to put the computer on himself and get it all set up.

It is a special allocated time when the student has one to one interaction with the tutor and can form an ongoing relationship, having the tutor interested and following closely the progress the student makes...I believe the student thrives on this individual interest in his development.

Public Recognition

In 2012 the SOLVE IT Program was a finalist in the NSW Premier’s Partnership Award. Our entry focused on the unique blend of trained volunteers working in partnership with our school and all of our partner schools across rural NSW.

In 2012 the SOLVE IT program was a Laureate and a gold medal winner in the international Computerworld Honours Program

RFWS gives a huge thank you to our amazing volunteers, dedicated staff, gorgeous students, great partner schools and enthusiastic parents, the incredibly supportive RFWS P&C and the NSW Department of Education and Communities, in particular the Curriculum, Learning and Innovation Centre.

**NSW Centre for Effective Reading Manly**

As part of the NSW Centre for Effective Reading, RFWS provides multidisciplinary assessments to country students with severe reading difficulties. A team, consisting of two special educators, a school counsellor and a speech pathologist work with individual students, their families and their home schools to develop a plan for reading intervention implemented in the student’s own school with support from the team in Manly.

The Centre in Manly also provides intensive services for students who have highly complex difficulties and who are not responding to supported interventions. The intensive services may take the form of a residential placement and may include the use of assistive technology.

During 2012 the Centre carried out 26 multidisciplinary assessments, ran intensive residential services to 16 students identified as needing additional interventions and provided ongoing support to an additional 82 students, their families and their schools. The team participated in over 100 video and telephone conferences with home schools and parents to enable ongoing individualization of the jointly developed Plans for Reading Intervention.
What do parents say?

The assistive technology is staggeringly fantastic. I never knew about it before.

The increase in confidence has been amazing.

It’s brilliant how the staff work to meet the individual needs of kids and parents.

I can’t say enough about the teachers here – they are just wonderful.

I love the fact we have a direction and a plan to work with back at school.

I love the way that parents in involved in this – I feel vital to the success of the reading plan.

What do schools and regional staff say?

I was really happy to be involved in the video link this morning. Congratulations on the excellent work your team does. The world is considerably richer for your work (Regional consultant)

Thank you, and thanks so much for all your support. We are very proud of X’s progress this year and I think it has been successful because we have all worked together as a team to support him. Your input has been invaluable and I appreciate all that you have done for us throughout the year. (Teacher)

Early Learning

The main aim of our Early Learning Team is to empower parents.

Our Early Learning Team assesses and monitors early learning skills with a focus on literacy. Reports and suggestions for activities to strengthen emerging skills are provided to parents, preschools and schools. Where there are significant concerns the team suggests referral for full speech and language assessment through local community health or RFW clinical services.

In 2012 the team ran weekly informal parent sessions where simple strategies to develop strong early literacy skills are modeled, resources are demonstrated and parents are shown the wonderful early learning resources on our school website. These parent sessions aim to nurture a positive relationship where parents feel comfortable, supported and valued in a school setting. Activities during the weekly parent meetings include:

- Parents taking part in learning experiences that are appropriate for their child and that build on their child’s strengths;
- Parents engaging in simple activities that can be carried out at home and that lay
firm foundations for later learning and help to build strong parent/child relationships. Such activities include drawing, dough, block building, reading books together, puzzles, singing;

- Parent education about how everyday activities can encourage early learning – playing, shopping, driving, walking and having time "to just be";
- Demonstrating useful technology including tablets and our website resources;
- Open discussion where parents and teachers can share ideas.

The Early Learning Team work with home school staff where appropriate providing samples of “what works” such as visuals and social stories.

In 2012 a speech pathologist was engaged by the school to upload early literacy resources to the RFWS website. Many of the resources are part of the SWAY (Sounds, Words and Yarning) program, created as part of a Quality Teacher Indigenous Project at our school. Resources include online interactive games, interactive whiteboard lessons and printable resources for both parents and teachers.

Aboriginal education

At the beginning of 2012 we restructured our Learning and Support Team, embedding our full-time Aboriginal Education Officer into our LAST (Learning and Support Team) Centre with the aim of providing a more culturally inclusive and informed key service in the school. This has been highly successful, with both formal and informal team assessments, planning and interventions being facilitated by both the physical and systems change.

We continue to strive to provide culturally inclusive programs in all areas of the school and have a wealth of wonderful Aboriginal resources, artworks and displays.

During 2012 we worked with 294 Aboriginal students and their families. Our Aboriginal Education Officer was a key participant in most of the video links where the student involved was Aboriginal, visibly reducing stress levels for parents and Aboriginal support staff in our rural schools.

We held interviews with Aboriginal parents who had taken part in at least one of our team video conferences. They commented that VCs give the opportunity to “put faces to names”, enabling better cultural practices and less stressful communication. They noted that Aboriginal people communicate more effectively in a face-to-face situation, rather than in writing or by telephone. They stressed that Aboriginal people
use a lot of body language, and recent history can make it difficult to talk on the phone to anyone.

Student Welfare
Student welfare is at the heart of everything we do – we strive to provide a safe, secure and stimulating school environment for our students, who often come to us with enormous trepidation.

We work hand in hand with our whole school community – including schools across the state – to support out students and their families to enable them to be very best they can be.

Multicultural education
We have a trained Anti-Racism Officer, an Aboriginal Education Officer and a strong culture of inclusiveness.

Progress on 2012 targets
Target 1: Literacy
Our achievements include:

- Measureable improvement in literacy levels of students being supported through the SOLVE IT program (see page 12 for details)
- Digitization of reading materials to support SOLVE IT program
- Recruitment and training of additional tutors
- Weekly parent education in universal strategies for fostering early literacy development
- Weekly Learning and Support Team Meetings tracking students to ensure access to appropriate support at home school or through RFWS outreach
- 513 educational assessments and parent meetings during 2013. Reports, including recommendations to home schools, supplied for every assessment.
- Centre for Effective Reading Manly conducted 26 multidisciplinary assessments and ran intensive residential programs for 16 students.
- All assessments and intensive programs were followed up by multiple video conferences with home school staff and parents.
- Centre Manly trained 16 students, their parents and schools in the use of assistive technology for students identified by the Centre Learning and Support Team as needing additional tools to thrive in the school environment. Students were provided with loan laptops loaded with assistive software to facilitate the implementation of technology at the home school level.
- Extension of RFWS website to include bank of resources for teacher and parent use to develop early literacy skills
- 177 Early Learning Assessments
Target 2: Numeracy

Our achievements include:

- 13 Numeracy Assessments were carried out on request from RFW
- Parent education in developing early numeracy skills is incorporated into our Early Learning weekly parent sessions
- All students are given passwords to use an online Mathematics program

Target 3: Wellbeing and Engagement

Our achievements include:

- Preparation of draft Rock and Water program for consideration by RFW
- RFWS high school teacher involved in video conferences to share effective strategies
- Work readiness skills and goal setting incorporated into classroom program
- Increased number of video links with high school teams

Target 4: Aboriginal Education

Our achievements include:

- Organizational structure of RFWS Learning and Support Team includes Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO). AEO also now physically placed within LAST Room to facilitate truly inclusive, wrap around service.
- Improved quality of preadmission information for Aboriginal students
- Increase in number of referrals to AEO for preadmission contact with Aboriginal families

School evaluation

NSW public schools conduct evaluation to support the effective implementation of the school plan. In 2012 our school carried out evaluation of our SOLVE IT program and of our communication with parents, focusing on parents of preschoolers.

SOLVE IT program

Background

SOLVE IT, the RFWS outreach online learning program, began in 2008 as a collaboration between the Department of Education Centre for Learning Innovation (CLI), RFWS and Holmwood School in rural NSW. At that time we were
seeking ways to support our students in remote schools once they returned to their local area.

The initial trial in 2009 used One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) devices to provide remote literacy lessons to two children with severe reading difficulties. Even though the technology was extremely limited we found that both students made impressive gains in their reading as well as their confidence and attitude to school.

During 2009 we also trialed the use of video conferencing to deliver individual lessons, but found the platform daunting for students, lacking in intimacy, open to environmental distractions, often not available and not acceptable to students.

In 2010, following extensive consultation, CLI developed a bespoke interface for SOLVE IT and an online version of an existing highly structured reading program. Volunteer tutors were recruited from the local Manly area, full training provided and our partner schools in rural and remote NSW were offered places in the program as suitable students were identified as needing additional, intensive assistance.

RFWS now supports 30 students at any one time on the SOLVE IT reading program, with over 70 students having accessed the service since it began full operation in 2010.

We had copious anecdotal evidence that most students really enjoyed the online learning and knew that many made impressive gains in their literacy skills. Was also felt that there was a ripple effect impacting on self-esteem, confidence, attitude to schooling, attendance and behaviour.

In 2012 CLI commissioned a University of Western Sydney research project to investigate these “hidden benefits” of the SOLVE IT program. At the same time, RFWS carried out a quantitative study of the actual gains in literacy skills of all students who have taken part in the program.

**Findings and conclusions**

While the final report is not available at this time, the findings from the draft version are compelling. The study gathered information from surveys and interviews involving students, teachers, parents and tutors; focus groups and attendance data. A preliminary analysis showed:

- All students, teachers and parents believed that the students’ involvement in the program had improved their learning
- Teachers noted an increase in students’ motivation for learning
- Teachers commented on improved behaviour, attitude to learning, increased independence and enthusiasm as being outcomes of being on the program
- All participants were very positive about the use of technology as a motivating influence on the students’ learning
- Many students seemed to change their view of themselves as learners and of learning as being important to their future
- Most students commented on the social aspect of the program as engaging them; they liked developing a relationship with a ‘mate’. This was supported by individual tutors and focus groups

A full version of the study will be available on the RFWS web site when available.
A RFWS analysis of reading progress of current SOLVE IT students at the end of 2012 found that, given sufficient time and regular, structured lessons, the vast majority of students made significant gains in reading skills. The results for students at the end of 2012 who had been on the program for 20 weeks are shown below.

**Early Learning Program: Communication with Parents**

**Background**

At RFWS we enrol students from 3½. We are also lucky enough to have our parents on site so are in a unique position to build skills and knowledge in our parent body.

In 2012 we introduced two new opportunities for our parents to come together with our preschool staff – our group 1 assembly and a weekly parent information and demonstration sessions.

As many of our parents have had very negative experiences at schools themselves, we wanted to be sure that they felt comfortable about coming into our preschool classroom and that they felt the sessions were both useful and enjoyable. We used parent surveys and a focus group as our research tools.

**Findings and conclusions**

- Parents felt comfortable and welcome coming into the preschool classroom
- Parents felt communication was effective and clear
- Parents were very happy with the feedback they received
- Parents were very happy with the learning environment and felt that their children were well-supported

**Future directions**

- In 2013 we will work with RFW to trial the SOLVE IT framework to provide outreach programs in speech pathology, psychology and occupational therapy as well as individual, intensive literacy programs for high school students
- We will develop digital resources to support students on SOLVE IT who plateau due to extreme difficulty with specific areas of reading mastery

*Individual student growth as measured by mastery of MULTILIT levels for SOLVE IT students in 2012. The vertical axis refers to student growth with respect to their starting and current MULTILIT mastered level. These levels start at 1.1 with single sounds through to 12.6. The horizontal axis represents each student.*
Future directions

- All parents of preschoolers booked in for both parent sessions during the week
- Install a computer in our parent room to enable families to browse our online resources
- Early Learning Team to initiate education video conferences involving rural school staff and our parents to work as a team to enhance early learning programs
- Provide ongoing consultancy to inexperienced rural school preschool staff through videoconferencing

Professional learning

- All teachers at RFWS took part in a range of professional learning activities including innovative use of technology, autism and behaviour management, dyslexia and complex reading difficulties, emotional disorders, literacy and numeracy, moderate to severe intellectual disabilities, Aboriginal cultural knowledge, careers, resilience and drug education.
- All staff took part in Staff Development Days programs which included Anaphylaxis management, Asthma management, critical incident training, Child Protection, use of innovative technologies in the classroom, fundamentals of inclusion of all students into mainstream classrooms and privacy issues.
- In 2012 we had 4 teachers in the school working towards accreditation, with 2 completing the accreditation process during the year. We did not have any new scheme teachers maintaining accreditation during 2012.
- Total spending on teacher professional learning in 2012 comprised $9514.95 in tied funds and $1556 from school global funds
- The average expenditure for each teacher at the school during 2012 was $1230.

Parent Satisfaction

We used surveys and focus groups to find out how our parents felt about our school. We found:

- They feel very welcome in the school and that their children love to come here.
- They feel they can talk to the teachers and all felt supported by the school.
- They feel that RFWS tries to help their child back at their home school.
- Almost all said that they had a better understanding how to help their child after coming to this school.
- The only suggestion for improving our service was to include a tour of the whole school as part of parent orientation. This will be offered in 2013.

Staff Satisfaction

A staff survey found that people enjoy working here, feel supported, feel part of a team and believe they can make suggestions for improvement. Staff commented very positively
about the supportive, inclusive and committed culture at the school.

Staff noted that it can be stressful working with families experiencing severe hardship and distress and appreciated the support offered through both informal and formal networks at the school.

Staff were particularly enthusiastic about SOLVE IT and video conferencing as positive ways to improve educational outcomes for our students, but at the same time expressed frustration that the school has a limited capacity to provide this type of outreach support service.

School planning 2012—2014

The school planning policy provides direction for the preparation and implementation of school plans including the identification of priority areas, intended outcomes and targets that are consistent with the NSW State Plan and the Department’s planning documents.

School priority 1: Literacy

Outcome for 2012–2014

- Increase in literacy skills as measured by individual standardized assessments from below to above age appropriate levels

- Students with severe literacy difficulties accessing the curriculum with the assistance of technology

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- Increase in numbers of students accessing SOLVE IT
- SOLVE IT supporting increased numbers of high school students with severe reading difficulties who are unable to access local individual, intensive support
- SOLVE IT Centre providing remote speech pathology, psychology and occupational therapy as a result of partnership with RFWS clinical services
- RFWS website to contain best practice resources for literacy development from preschool to high school level

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Recruit additional SOLVE IT volunteers
- RFWS to develop high school literacy online program targeting multisyllabic words, comprehension skills and assignment writing skills
- Second SOLVE IT room established; ongoing negotiations with RFWS
- Ongoing employment of consultant speech pathologist and special educator to source and develop online resources
School priority 2: Wellbeing and Engagement

Outcome for 2012–2014

- Improved engagement in learning at their home schools for RFWS high school students

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- Ongoing mentoring support following visit to RFWS
- Improved complex literacy skills for struggling high school students
- Reduced anxiety levels for high school students
- Introduction of a range of Rock and Water programs with associated skill-building with rural school partners

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Establishment of Virtual Tutorial Centre
- RFWS high school teacher to be involved in video conferences involving high school students
- Expansion of online literacy support for students unable to access individual, intensive reading programs
- Use of SOLVE IT facility for RFW psychology services
- Negotiation with RFW regarding possibility of group delivery of Rock and Water

School priority 3: Aboriginal Education

Outcome for 2012–2014

- Increased percentage of Aboriginal students who attend RFWS completing year 12 or recognized vocational training

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- Strengthen parent-school partnership at both RFWS and student's rural school
- Strengthen student engagement with learning both at RFWS and student’s rural school
- Programs at RFWS and students’ home schools to culturally inclusive
- More Aboriginal students accessing SOLVE IT and SOLVE IT PLUS

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- More contact with RFWS Aboriginal Education Officer prior to admission for all new clients
- AEO involvement in video links
- Enrolment in Virtual Tutorial Centre
- AEO involvement in Virtual Tutorial Centre
- Audit of RFWS high school resources
- Development of resource bank on RFWS website of culturally inclusive high school resources
- Video conferences to be used to recommend culturally inclusive resources that have been effective
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.

Jenny Rayner, Principal
David Barr, School Council President
Errol Hunt, School Council vice-President
The entire teaching and support staff at Royal Far West School

School contact information

Royal Far West School
22 Wentworth St, Manly, 2095
Ph: 9977 2452
Fax: [9976 2744
Email: royalfarwe-s.school@det.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 5504
Web: royalfarwe-s.schools.nsw.edu.au

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:


A special thanks to our wonderful P&C (affectionately known as The Friends) for their passionate and practical support for the school. Their commitment to our literacy programs has made a huge difference to countless country kids.

Happy 90th birthday to Gwen Davidson, President of our P&C and amazing long-time supporter of Royal Far West School.
In 2012 we worked with students, families and schools from hundreds of towns including:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Town</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
<td>Cooma</td>
<td>Holmwood</td>
<td>Mullumbimby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardliehan</td>
<td>Coonamble</td>
<td>Inverell</td>
<td>Murrumburrah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballina</td>
<td>Cootamundra</td>
<td>Jindabyne</td>
<td>Muswellbrook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balranald</td>
<td>Coramba</td>
<td>Junee</td>
<td>Nambucca Heads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baradine</td>
<td>Cowper</td>
<td>Kandos</td>
<td>Narrabri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barellan</td>
<td>Cowra</td>
<td>Kelso</td>
<td>Narranga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barmedman</td>
<td>Crookwell</td>
<td>Kempsey</td>
<td>Ulladulla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathurst</td>
<td>Cudgegon</td>
<td>Koolyangara</td>
<td>Ulong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beelbangera</td>
<td>Cumnock</td>
<td>Kooringal</td>
<td>Vincentai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bega</td>
<td>Currabubula</td>
<td>Kootingal</td>
<td>Nyngan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berridale</td>
<td>Deniliquin</td>
<td>Kororo</td>
<td>Old Bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binnaway</td>
<td>Dubbo</td>
<td>Lake Albert</td>
<td>Pambula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boambee</td>
<td>Elangowan</td>
<td>Lake Cargellico</td>
<td>Parkes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogangar</td>
<td>Forbes</td>
<td>Lake Wyangan</td>
<td>Pilliga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bomaderry</td>
<td>Gilgandra</td>
<td>Landsdowne</td>
<td>Port Macquarie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boorowa</td>
<td>Girilambone</td>
<td>Latham</td>
<td>Quaama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourke</td>
<td>Gloucester</td>
<td>Lavington</td>
<td>Quirindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowraville</td>
<td>Goodooga</td>
<td>Lightning Ridge</td>
<td>Rock, The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewarrina</td>
<td>Goolgowi</td>
<td>Lockhart</td>
<td>Rylstone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken Hill</td>
<td>Grafton</td>
<td>Lue</td>
<td>Sanctuary Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureen Junction</td>
<td>Graften</td>
<td>Macksville</td>
<td>Sandy Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calare</td>
<td>Griffith</td>
<td>Maclean</td>
<td>Sawtell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carinda</td>
<td>Gulgong</td>
<td>Manilla</td>
<td>Scone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobar</td>
<td>Gunnedah</td>
<td>Mendooran</td>
<td>Stockers Siding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffs Harbour</td>
<td>Gwabegar</td>
<td>Merriwa</td>
<td>Sunshine Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coleambally</td>
<td>Hallidays Point</td>
<td>Milton</td>
<td>Tallimba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collarenenbri</td>
<td>Hargraves</td>
<td>Moree</td>
<td>Tamworth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conargo</td>
<td>Harrington</td>
<td>Moruya</td>
<td>Taree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condoblin</td>
<td>Hastings</td>
<td>Mount Austin</td>
<td>Tathra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coorowull</td>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>Mount George</td>
<td>Temora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coolah</td>
<td>Hillston</td>
<td>Mudgee</td>
<td>Tenterfield</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>