

Statutory Annual Report 2008

Yes folks, another riveting charge through a year in the life of Candlebark, as required by the Australian Government Programmes for Schools Quadrennial Administrative Guidelines 2005 to 2008.

Staff Retention and Attendance

In 2008, Candlebark had 7 full time teachers including the Principal, plus 5 part time teachers, 3 visiting instrumental teachers, and two aides employed to provide support for children with learning difficulties. Two part-time teachers and two full-time teachers left at the end of the year. This may sound a lot, but none seemed to be leaving through dissatisfaction with the school; quite the contrary. One however left because a position was abolished. The staff attendance rate was 97%.

Student Attendance

In 187 teaching days we had 447 absences, representing an attendance rate of 97.14%

Staff Professional Development

Among external courses/seminars/conferences attended by staff in 2008 were ones in special education, Italian, first aid, positive interventions with children who present challenging behaviours, reading, ballet teaching, and the teaching of phonics. Additional to this is school initiated professional development, which in 2008 included the teaching of Maths, with Dr Gaye Williams; of Science, with Dr Jenny Sharwood; of literacy, with Stephen Graham; a psychotherapeutic approach to issues that arise within schools, with Carolyn Aston; and workshops and symposia in various other subject areas. \$9568.10 was spent on staff professional development.

Value Added

Candlebark adds value in many different ways, for example by offering a weekly programme of activities which has included first aid, 500 (that's the card game) in Spanish, gardening, knitting, drama, pottery, cooking, Italian, basketball skills, hockey skills, animation, Rube Goldberg Machines, film-making, writing, and many others. Although a small school, we have many camps, excursions and sleepovers, which in 2008 included bike camps, a ski trip, a camp in Melbourne, hiking (in the Grampians, along the Cross-Cut Saw, and from Trentham to Kerrie), a camp in Beechworth, six weeks in Italy for the Year 9's, the Melbourne Writers' Festival, as well as bush camping, tours of the Australian Ballet Headquarters, and many more.

Values

Values and character development are important to us. We are probably unique among Australian schools in this respect. We expect students to value niceness over evil, be inclusive, and take on responsibilities that challenge them to aspire to higher levels. A great deal of staff time and energy goes into creating a climate that is positive and benevolent. We encourage students to think in empathetic and creative ways and we didactically teach communication skills and resilience.

Literacy

We participated enthusiastically – for the second year – in the Premier’s Reading Challenge. 54 students completed the challenge, and 1698 books were read. We continue to use the Fitzroy Reading Method, a phonics-based program, as the foundation of our literacy education, with outstanding results.

Music

Many students learned a musical instrument (piano, guitar, cello) in one-on-one lessons. Dance continued to feature strongly in the school program, with very pleasing outcomes. There were many opportunities for students to have extra dance instruction during their free time. We had a number of concerts and soirees throughout the year, culminating in a production of *Kid A*, a musical written and produced by a staff member, and which involved every child in the school.

Sport

Formal competitive sport against other schools has never been part of the school’s program, but students played a wide variety of sports during PE, during free time, and during activity sessions. The sports included basketball, soccer, rugby, cricket and tennis. Bike riding, bushwalking, cross country running and orienteering are also featured at Candlebark. In 2008 a school triathlon was held for the second time, which around here means it now qualifies as a Tradition. The triathlon included all students, from Prep to Year nine. In 2008 the school again participated in a touch rugby competition, entering a mixed team of adults and students. We actually won two games.

Other Activities

The Grade 6 students won a trip to the Melbourne Show, as successful finalists in an Art competition, and came home with a life-size fibreglass cow, painted to their design. We’re still wondering where to put the damn thing. The school put on a major musical production of a play called *Kid A*, an innovative full-length theatrical extravaganza, written by staff member Scott Hatcher. A sophisticated and contemporary/futuristic Christmas story, it explored many aspects of our greed/consumerism driven culture. Chess is an activity that is particularly encouraged. It is part of the school timetable, and a popular activity during free time, with much support from staff.

Academic Outcomes

Candlebark is a non-selective school attracting a wide variety of students. We are required to publish Naplans test results, even though we do not consider them to be of much value: NAPLANS Test results: Year 3: All students exceeded the national minimum standard in Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation and Numeracy, for this year level. Year 5: All students exceeded the national minimum standard in Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation and Numeracy, for this year level. Year 7: All students exceeded the national minimum standard in Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation and Numeracy, for this year level, except for one student who was below the national minimum standard in Writing and Spelling. Year 9: All students exceeded the national minimum standard in Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation and Numeracy, for this year level.

Annual Parental Survey

To comply with bureaucratic requirements a parental survey was distributed to all families in early 2009. Only four responses were received. This may be because parents who have concerns about the school don't wait until they get a survey form after the year is finished to express those concerns. Anyway, the results were very positive, even if not of much statistical significance. The school receives many unsolicited e-mails and other messages from parents, expressing their delight with the school. Parents frequently refer other families looking for a school to Candlebark, but we have so many students seeking places at the school that waiting lists are effectively closed. We regard these as more meaningful criteria than surveys.

Annual Teacher Survey

To comply with bureaucratic requirements a survey of teachers was delivered to all teaching staff in May 2009. None responded. No intimidation or blandishments were employed to bring about this result. It's more likely that they felt they had better things to do with their time, like, hmmm, let me guess.... I know, teaching!. The staff members at Candlebark consistently express in words and actions a positive attitude towards the school.

Candlebark's Teaching Staff 2008

At the highest level of attainment, as specified by the reporting conditions, the academic staff held the following degrees and diplomas: one doctorate, one Masters' degree, and ten Bachelors' degrees. Candlebark acknowledges that it uses its best endeavours to ensure that it conforms with the relevant Government Acts, both State and Federal relating to educational institutions. Immunisation Requirements for School Enrolment 1. The school acknowledges its responsibilities under the Public Health (Amendment) Act 1992 (The Act) in relation to the control of vaccine-preventable diseases. 2. Parents enrolling their children are required to provide the school with an Immunisation Certificate. 3. In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, the school upholds the provisions of the Act requiring that un-immunised children are excluded from the school for the duration of the outbreak. The word "outbreak" in The Act is used in the context of a child enrolled at the school suffering from a vaccine-preventable disease.